

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SKILLS RETENTION
STRATEGIES APPLIED BY THE NAMIBIAN DEFENCE FORCE (NDF)

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES (MASSS)

OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

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March 2018

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to investigate the effectiveness of skills retention strategies in the Namibian Defence Force (NDF) under the title “An Investigation into the Effectiveness of Skills Retention Strategies Applied by the Namibian Defence Force”. The objectives of the study were to examine challenges that undermined the effectiveness of skills retention strategies in the NDF and how the NDF’s failure to retain its competent and well trained military members will affect national security, and to recommend measures needed to mitigate staff members’ retention challenges in the defence force. The researcher conducted a theoretical study and then carried out a survey in the concerned area. In this study, the researcher used qualitative research instruments consisting of in-depth interviews with senior management staff as well as a perusal of relevant documents as the primary instruments of the research. The responses were collected and analysed to gain a deeper understanding of skilled members’ motives for leaving the force prematurely. To validate data or response from selected respondents, the researcher requested permission from Senior Staff Officers Human Resource (SSO HR) to retrieve former NDF members’ personnel files and made comparisons between the reasons given by former NDF members during in-depth interviews and the reasons they have articulated in their statements placed in their personnel records to see whether there is a correlation between the aforementioned reasons. The main finding of the study was that the main challenge that undermined the effectiveness of skills retention strategies in the NDF was the absence of unique retention strategies for the defence force to retain its highly trained soldiers. The study further established that the NDF’s failure to retain its well-trained military members has the potential to disturb the national, regional and international peace and security. The recommendations of the study were that the management and policy makers of the NDF should carefully plan incentive programmes and introduce unique retention strategies for the NDF members to overcome the labour turn over issue.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND/OR ACRONYMS

Act	-	Defence Act, 2002 (Act 1 of 2002)
ATC	-	Air Traffic Controllers
ATPL	-	Airline Transport Pilots Licence
AU	-	African Union
CDF	-	Chief of the Defence Force
COS HR	-	Chief of Staff Human Resources
FRI	-	Financial Retention Initiative
GIPF	-	Government Institution Pension Fund
HOSSM	-	Home Owners' Scheme for Staff Members
ICT	-	Information Communication and Technology
MASSS	-	Master of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies
MoD	-	Ministry of Defence
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCOs	-	Non-Commissioned Officers
NDF	-	Namibian Defence Force
O/M/As	-	Offices, Ministries and Agencies
PLAN	-	Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia
PSC	-	Public Service Commission
RAF	-	Royal Air Force
RCs	-	Regional Councils
SADC	-	Southern Africa Development Community
SSO HR	-	Senior Staff Officers Human Resource
SWATF	-	South West African Territorial Force
SWOT	-	Strengths, Weakens, Opportunities and Threats
T&D	-	Training and Development

- UK** - United Kingdom
- UN** - United Nations
- UNAM** - The University of Namibia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the University of Namibia for responding positively to my application and give me the opportunity to become one of the students in the course of Master of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies.

My utmost appreciation goes to my research thesis supervisor Prof. P. H. Van Rooyen for his advice and guidance during the period of conducting the research project. Without his assistance the researcher could not have fulfilled the required criteria's as well as other aspects related to the study, and this project would not have been completed on time.

My greatest appreciation goes to the Chief of the Defence Force, Lieutenant General J. Mutwa for accepting and contributes to this research and makes it become a reality. In the same vein, I would also like to thank the former NDF members and the senior management staff of the Namibian Defence Force, who took part in the research and answered the in-depth interview schedules that made it possible.

Special appreciation is also given to my daughter, Ms. Lineekela Ndahaleumbo Ruben who has been doing the editing work throughout the process of writing this thesis.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere thanks to all my family and friends especially those names I cannot mention, especially those who helped me in one way or the other through editing and additions; I say may God bless you all.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my faithful God, my Grandmother Lineekela Ndahaleumbo Ya Numbaekudja who has laid the solid foundation of my education and her tireless effort and unquenchable love and support throughout my career.

To my parents Mr. Ruben Kaambula Hamwaanyena and Mrs Sylvia Kamati, my cherished wife Theopolina N. Ruben and my children, you took over to guarantee that my dream for high academic achievements become real.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Retention of highly qualified personnel is an issue that all organisations must continually address. The military is not exempt from this problem – in fact, retention of personnel may be a greater problem for the military than for civilian organisations due to the current low comparative pay for military positions (Benjamin, MacDermid, Strauss, & Weiss 2001). Many military personnel choose to return to civilian life later in their careers, attracted by more appealing private sector opportunities. This happens frequently in specific fields such as pilots and in the technical specialties; fields that are expensive to train. This chapter will introduce the reader to the background of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the significance of the study, limitations of the study and delimitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

In many countries, the military is facing a critical loss of often highly qualified members who choose to leave upon completion of their initial obligatory service. (“Recruiting and Retention of Military Personnel: An International Perspective,” 2007). Climer (2010), articulates that military turnover carries costs more acute than turnover in the civilian world. While some costs are tangible (financial), others are intangible and related to the restrictions of military service. The demands of military service, its members’ unlimited liability and the necessity to succeed in vital missions demand a numerically healthy force and the maintenance of corporate knowledge that can only be learned and institutionalised through experience. Unlike business, the service industries, manufacturing, agriculture or other employment sectors, military skills cannot, for the most part, be learned anywhere outside a military context. Military forces have “no lateral entry, the most able people must be identified, retained and promoted from within the organization” (Climer, 2010, p. 35).

The military profession does not bring in senior leaders laterally from outside of the organisation; they must be developed from its own junior leaders, in no other field are the professionals expected to willingly lay down their lives if necessary (Climer, 2010). This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of skill retention strategies applied by the Namibian Defence Force (NDF).

The NDF experienced challenges in retaining its highly trained and experienced members, especially those having scarce expertise and high technical qualifications. The process of recruiting members with academic qualifications into the NDF has resulted in a high rate of turnover because their qualifications were in demand in the labour market and a number of highly qualified and experienced officers as well as other ranks leaving the force were increasing every year (Ndjoba, 2014). It seems that there is no retention policy or strategy in place to retain NDF members who decide to leave the force prematurely. The two current available government policies which are supposed to address this situation are only focusing on human capital development, but they are silent on skills retention strategies. These policies are:

- Office of the Prime Minister–Human Resource Development Policy Framework For Accelerated Service Delivery in the Public Service of Namibia (2012).
- Ministry of Defence (MoD) – Defence Policy (2011)

The NDF was established by the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia 1990, Article 115, with the mandate to “defend the territory and national interests of Namibia” (p. 58). Its secondary roles include assisting civil and local authorities in domestic support operations when required, as well as to undertake Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), African Union (AU) and United Nations (UN) peace support missions. The constitutional provision for the establishment of a national defence force was necessitated by “the need to

safeguard the gains of independence and the preservation of the country's national interests” (Defence Policy, 2011, p. 2).

According to the Defence Act, 2002 (Act 1 of 2002), the NDF consists of the Namibian Army, the Namibian Air Force and the Namibian Navy. The Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) is the highest ranking military officer who is vested with the constitutional powers for the effective management, command and control of the Namibian Defence Force. The CDF provides a link between the political leadership and the armed forces. The command and control of the NDF, as well as the defence force supervisory bodies are deliberated hereunder.

The Defence Policy (2011), expressed that by the provision of the Constitution, the President of the Republic of Namibia is the Commander-in-Chief of the Namibian Defence Force. The President exercises his/her command and control of the NDF through the CDF, who is directly accountable to him/her for the effective administrative and operational command and control of defence force. By virtue of this command relationship the CDF has direct access to the Commander-In-Chief on matters of military and national security. The CDF also acts as the principal advisor to the Minister.

The “Parliamentary Standing Committees on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security and the Cabinet Committee on Defence, Security and International Relations are bodies which were established to oversee the defence and security issues of the country” (Defence Policy, 2011, p. 30). By virtue of their mandate these bodies have oversight functions over the activities of the NDF.

The Defence Policy proclaimed that one of the key tenets or characteristics of a democratic system of government is the political control of the military. The principal advantage is that it establishes stable civil relations. To reflect its dual role and ensure that military advice is

ready available, the MoD has a joint civil/military component performing the day to day administrative functions. The ministry takes note of the professional views of senior military officers in the process of policy formulation and decision making on defence matters.

As expressed in Defence Policy (2011), there are many defence priorities, but the following three are the “core” priorities.

- To ensure that the Namibian Defence Force has the necessary capability to fulfill its constitutional mandate;
- To ensure that the Defence Force has the capability to operate effectively in domestic support operations.
- To contribute to promoting Namibia’s wider security interest in the region and in the world through the maintenance of international peace and security.

In addition, retention of qualified military members is also one of the priorities of the MoD, particularly the NDF. Therefore, “the existence of a defence policy will enable and empower our armed forces to uphold their military ethics and traditions. Moreover, it will help the country to renew its commitment and dedication to the promotion of national, regional and global peace and security” (Defence Policy, 2011, p. 2).

The Defence policy (2011), postulates that the majority of the NDF members who constituted the defence force as from 1990 to 1995 were the finest sons and daughters participated in the war of national liberation (former People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN)) fighters, and few former members of the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF). During that time period the turnover rate was very low. As from 1996 to date, the NDF has recruited a number of men and women between the ages of 18 and 25 years old with a minimum

education qualification of grade 10 and above. Further requirements may be as prescribed by the CDF for the recruitment in specialised fields.

As stated by the Office of the Prime Minister in Human Resource Development Policy Framework for Accelerated Service Delivery in the Public Service of Namibia (2012), “academic training and development (T&D) offers the opportunity to acquire academic and professional qualifications specifically required by the job specification. Fore examples of such qualifications include certificates, national higher certificates and diplomas as well as degrees from institutions of higher learning, presented through full-time, part-time or modular training and knowledge acquisition” (p. 25).

The policy further states that academic T&D is offered to staff members based on the mandate of the Offices, Ministries and Agencies (O/M/As) or Regional Councils (RCs) concerned, and its evident inability to deliver quality, effective and efficient service due to a clearly identified shortage of essential professional/technical skills to do current and future work. However, this policy fails to provide guidelines regarding what strategies are developed to outline how the O/M/As would go about retaining their current staff members who have acquired essential professional or technical qualifications.

Similarly, Defence Policy (2011), guided that “measures should be taken to ensure that NDF soldiers are equipped with proper skills and competencies to enable them to deploy and effectively operate in any location within the borders of the Republic of Namibia as well as in foreign territories” (p.19). In the same vein, this policy fails to give directions regarding what strategies are developed to outline how the NDF would go about retaining its current soldiers who are equipped with proper skills and competencies.

Due to the policies' silence or policies' gap on skills retention strategies, the researcher's assumptions was that since the NDF training and development programme includes short and long term qualifying courses in different fields of specialities. Such fields include Information Technology, medicine, legal courses among others as well as promotional courses for officers and Non-commissioned officers (NCOs), these courses are might be the main contributing factors to skilled members leaving the defence force after being equipped with necessary skills, knowledge and competencies to efficiently and effectively do jobs.

In as much as this is a security sector concern, there was little concern or nothing done to rectify the problem regarding the impact of staff turnover in the NDF. The Namibian Public Safety Sector comprised of Namibian Defence Force, Namibian Police, Home Affairs and Immigration, Justice, Namibian Correctional Services and Anti-Corruption Commission as well as Namibian Intelligence Services.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Staff retention strategies rank top among the greatest challenges that many organisations face nowadays, let alone, military organisations in contemporary times (Bushe, 2012 as cited in Mapolisa, 2015). Military establishments around the globe are experiencing staff turnover which undermines staff retention, despite offering staff retention strategies they consider attractive. Furthermore, Mapolisa (2015), perceive that employee retention is one of the challenges facing many organisations both military and civilian, occasioned by globalisation that has intensified competition and increased mobility of highly skilled employees.

Holzer and Wissoker (2001), assert that turnover of employees disrupts teams, raises costs, reduces productivity and results in lost knowledge. Consequently, it is essential for the management to realise the importance of employee job satisfaction. Abbasi and Hallman

(2000), have stated that American industries are being incurred \$ 11million annually as a result of voluntary and involuntary turnover. This cost is due to termination, advertising, recruitment and selection. Turnover also produces ethereal costs, such as declining morale and the interruption of social and communication patterns as noticed by Mobely (1982).

The report by the Public Service Commission (PSC) (2013), indicated that more than 5 500 employees then left their government jobs in 2013. PSC chairperson, Eddy Amkongo, has expressed concern over the alarming rate at which government is losing employees, saying this could affect service delivery. The PSC report (2013) also indicated that in 2013, the number of staff members in the public service stood at 64 753. This number excludes members from the Namibian Defence Force, Correctional Services, Namibian Police, and Political office-bearers.

The PSC report (2013), disclosed that most turnovers were occurred within non-managerial positions where a staff turnover of 5 462 was recorded compared to the 44 turnovers in managerial positions. Several factors cited to have contributed to the turnover include job dissatisfaction, death, resignations, early retirement, dismissal, medical discharge, emigration, transfer, contract ending and search for greener pastures.

During an interview with the New Era, a daily Newspaper, Amkongo expressed disquiet over the situation (Over 5 500 quit civil service, 2015). The country's two key ministries – education and health – have been hardest hit by staff turnover, with education losing 3 644 staff members while health lost 1 052. Critics have attributed this to the fact that although nursing and teaching are declared as essential services, teachers and nurses continue to linger at the very bottom of the country's income pyramid, hence most of them are always on the lookout for better paying jobs.

The NDF has experienced a great challenge in retaining skilled officers and other ranks because of various factors, including but not limited to private sectors, state departments as they seek greener pastures on lateral and promotional basis as well as to the institutions of higher learning. Skilled members leaving the NDF are disruptive and costly, as the force lost the output while new starters are on their learning curves acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills, direct cost of training replacement in necessary skills, opportunity cost of time spend by Chief of Staff Human Resources (COS HR) and Service Commanders in recruiting, induction and training (Allen, 2008). The Minister of Defence, the National Planning Commissioner as well as the Chief of the Defence Force have not succeeded in drafting something concrete to mitigate current challenges, though on several occasions speeches were made by these individuals regarding government intentions to address the issues confronting the force.

The NDF senior management staff has in the recent past been working with various stakeholders on consultations about the best way forward on how to retain skilled members who intend to leave the force for greener pastures, as the number of skilled members leaving the force has been increasing annually, a concern that has prompted the NDF to try to examine challenges that undermined the effectiveness of skills retention strategies in the force and find a lasting solution that would curb the high rate of turnover.

The retention of qualified military personnel is essential to conserving morale and unit readiness, and to avoid the costs associated with training replacement personnel in essential skills (Rand Corporation, 2016).

1.3 Research objectives

The study has been guided by four objectives namely:

- 1.3.1 To investigate the effectiveness of skills retention strategies applied by the NDF.
- 1.3.2 To analyse the challenges that affect the effectiveness of skills retention strategies in the NDF.
- 1.3.3 To evaluate the extent to which the challenges to skills retention strategies impact on Namibia's national security.
- 1.3.4 To recommend strategic policy and scholarly measures that must be undertaken to ensure sustainable staff retention in the NDF.

1.4 Significance of the study

The findings from the study will be useful to military organisations in appreciating the effectiveness of skills retention strategies in the security sector. Moreover, the findings are of great significance to many stakeholders. These stakeholders include NDF leaders, MoD, skilled members and the researcher. Additionally, the findings from the study are important for the following reasons:

- The study provides NDF leaders with empirical data to arm them with possible standard and best practices to retain skilled members.
- The MoD would be provided with empirically tested information to help them improve policy decisions on staff retention strategies in the NDF.
- Findings from the study inform the skilled NDF members about the role they could play in making sure that the NDF retain them in a motivational and satisfying manner.

- This study benefits the researcher by mastering the art of carrying out qualitative research. The researcher derives a great deal of satisfaction from the study by growing academically since the study is undertaken in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies (MASSS) with the University of Namibia (UNAM).
- The study would also generate interest among some researchers to undertake further studies on this subject. Moreover, this study might also contribute to the body of knowledge by closing the gap regarding how well military and civilian organisations employed staff retention strategies.

Furthermore, the security sector community in Namibia will benefit from the study through the provision of an understanding of retention strategies, taking into account the factors that lead to skilled members' turnover and the essential requirements for implementing retention strategies, and how to address the problem.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The limitation encountered in the conduct of the study was access to information due to the sensitivity and confidentiality of the security sector. Key informants sometimes withheld classified information and documents needed for this study.

The study was limited to the skilled active duty members in the rank categories of major/equivalent and above within the Defence headquarters Windhoek, and those skilled persons who left the force for greener pastures.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

The study focused on the investigation of the effectiveness of skills retention strategies applied by the NDF. Given the geographical deployment of the NDF services and units, financial and time constraints, it was not possible to study all the services and units in the NDF. Therefore, the study was confined to the Defence headquarters in Windhoek, targeting the NDF skilled members in the rank categories of major/equivalent and above, and those persons who left the force for greener pastures as from 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively.

1.7 Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter introduced the reader to the background of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the significance of the study, limitations of the study and delimitation of the study. The next chapter focuses on the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER 2

Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

Theoretical grounding is an integral part of an entire research process and makes valuable contribution to every operational step (Kumar, 2005). In this chapter, the study will base its premises on theoretical literature with respect to staff retention strategies.

Shivangee and Pankaj (2011), asserted that employee retention involves taking measures to encourage employees to remain in the organisation for the maximum period of time. They further state that employee retention is beneficial to both the organisation and the employees. According to Kumar (2005), effective employee retention is a systematic effort by the employer of choice to create and foster an environment that encourages current employees to remain employed by having policies, procedures and practices that address their diverse needs. Herman and Gioia (2000), point that the phrase “employer of choice” is more than just a buzzword; it is representative of a whole new design of corporate culture. It means that people will choose to work for you; that people will choose to really dedicate themselves to your success; and that people will choose to stay even when they are being courted by recruiters from other employers—recruiters with exceptionally attractive inducements.

In the years ahead, labour force stability will be an organisation’s competitive edge. In these turbulent times, worsened by a tight labour market, employers will be continually challenged to locate, attract, optimize and retain the talent they need to serve their customers. The most successful employers will be those who legitimately inspire highly talented workers to join them and stay with them (Herman & Gioia, 2000). Since, retaining qualified personnel requires a deeper understanding of the process of turnover, the retention issue in this study would be approached from a turnover perspective.

2.2 Turnover

2.2.1 Definitions

Employees' turnover is a much studied phenomenon (Shaw, et al. 1998 as cited in Ongori, 2007, p. 1). However, there is no standard reason why people leave organisations. Employees' turnover can be described as "the rotation of staff members around the labour market; between firms, jobs and occupations and between the states of employment and unemployment" (Abbasi et al., 2000 as cited in Ongori, 2007, p. 1).

The term "turnover" is any permanent departure beyond organisational boundaries (Cascio, 1989 as cited in Asiamah, 2011). Cascio states that turnover can be classified as controllable and uncontrollable. Controllable turnover according to his definition is *voluntary* by the employee while uncontrollable turnover is *involuntary* which may be due to any of the following factors: transfers, retirements or deaths. He further classified turnover as functional, where in this case employees' departure produces a benefit for the organisation or is dysfunctional, where the departing employee is someone the organisation would like to retain.

The term "turnover" is also defined as the ratio of the number of organisational staff members who have left during the period being considered divided by the average number of employees in that organisation during the period (Price, 1977 as cited in Ongori, 2007, p.1). This term is also often utilized in efforts to measure relationships of employees in an organisation as they leave, regardless of reasons.

2.2.2 Turnover analysis and costing

There is little that an organisation can do to manage turnover unless there is a clear understanding of the reasons for it. According to Armstrong (2009), employee turnover, sometimes known as labour turn over, wastage or attrition, is the rate at which people leave an organisation. It can be disruptive and costly. Employee turnover may be a function of

negative job attitudes, low job satisfaction, combined with an ability to secure employment elsewhere.

Armstrong (2009), stresses that labour turnover rates provide a valuable means of benchmarking the effectiveness of human resource policies and practices in organisations. In addition, he states that if turnover is significantly higher than in comparable organisations, this should stimulate action to investigate why this is the case and to do something about it. It is a fact that staff members would leave an organisation if they are not satisfied with the compensation. Moreover, employee turnover has negative effects on both the morale and satisfaction of employees with their employment conditions. It is argued that organisations with high labour turnovers will find it difficult to replace the departed employees, and the direct and indirect costs to the organisation will be higher to replace employees.

According to Sims, Drasgow and Fitzgerald (2005), staff members' turnover is a major issue for most military organisations in the world. Sims, Drasgow and Fitzgerald (2005), asserted that turnover is a problem and an expensive consequence in the military. Their assertion is further supported by Hill (2000), who propounds that it can be very expensive to train, feed and equip soldiers who, when their commitment ends, take their newly learned skills and use them in a civilian company. Moreover, the high rate of staff turnover in the military may pose a security threat to national security. This notion is strengthened by Buzan (1991), who specified that the level and objectives of military threat can take on different levels of importance and the fact that they involve the use of force puts them in a special category when it comes to security.

Chaminade (2007), said that employee turnover occurred when employees leave their jobs and must be replaced. Replacing exiting members is costly to military organisations and destructive to service delivery. It is, therefore, imperative for leaders to reduce, to the minimum, the frequency at which members, particularly those that are crucial to its

operations leave. As discussed by Sumer and Ven (2007), not all types of voluntary turnover are negative. Nevertheless, voluntary turnover that is dysfunctional can be very costly for the military considering the scale of investments made in the recruitment, selection, classification and training of the members.

According to Hagenbeck (2005), training of military personnel is both expensive and lengthy. For example, it takes an average of four years and costs around millions of money to train one pilot. If that individual chooses to leave the force earlier than anticipated, the only way to replace him or her is to recruit and train another person. It is not possible to recruit qualified, experienced military pilots from the civilian world. Thus, since retention is a critical issue facing employers in the security sector as a result of the skilled members' turnover, it is obviously necessary to have a systematic approach to retention. One aspect of this issue is to understand where problems occur and why members opt to leave the force prematurely.

Orrick (2008), asserted that law enforcement turnover is a complex and difficult problem to manage. In many instances, the turnover occurs in trends. To identify these trends, law enforcement communities must track when officers resigned from the department. Using this information, charts can be developed to help illustrate the severity of the issue and how to coordinate retention efforts at critical times. Before a law enforcement community can determine the retention strategies to be initiated, it was critical to know the specific reasons why members are leaving the force. As departments seek to find the causes for turnover, officers must have an integral role in the process. One of the most important areas to clarify in this phase is to ask members what is important to them and their opinion of why staff members are leaving the force prematurely. To Orrick (2008), these several techniques could be used to capture this information, including confidential surveys, personal interviews, exit interviews and focus groups.

2.2.3 Reasons why staff members leave

Members do not necessarily leave for a single reason. In many cases, they decide after weighing different factors and the mixture of reasons is more complex to define. (Torrington et al., 2005 as cited in Asiamah, 2011), assert that defining the reasons of turnover is one of the most important steps that all security sectors need to take before making decisions of turnover management. Asiamah (2011), divides the drives of turnover into four categories: outside factors, functional turnover, push factors (internal factors) and pull factors (external factors).

2.2.3.1 Outside factors

These factors associate with situations that members leave for reasons that are unrelated to their job. For example, a staff member has to depart from current job because his family moves to another city or a woman has to terminate her job to take care of her young child. In these cases, the member has to suffer from the pressure of choosing between working and personal issues before they make a decision. These factors are beyond the control of organisations and unavoidable. Nevertheless, in necessary cases the management can reduce the shock of sudden by being more flexible and provide different choices to staff member, such as transfer or cross-transfer with another member.

2.2.3.2 Functional turnover

As briefly introduced above, this category consists of all resignations that are accepted or welcomed by the organisation and sometimes also by the member. A major example is departure due to poor performance or lack of conformity with organisational culture. Though these resignations are reasonable and less harmful to the organisation, it also comes with consequences such as lost opportunities and unnecessary cost. The main solution to reduce turnover rate of this group is improve recruitment and selection procedures, to ensure that

people assigned to specific positions are capable of doing their job in the first place. A minor part of this category is not because of member's lack of ability, but that it lies in organisational factors such as management scheme changes. Usually, changes result in new pressures and workplace ethics that are hard for the members to adapt in a short time.

2.2.3.3 Internal factors: Push factors

This category consists of the factors regarding dissatisfaction with job or the organisation that lead to undesirable turnover. According to Orrick (2008), push factors relate with wide range of issues, in which the most common are discussed hereunder:

- *Salary* – The most frequently cited reason by police executives of why officers leave is salary. There were a number of reasons for this. *First*, in many cases the level of salary, benefits and working conditions offered by local and state governments trail those found in the private sector or nearby agencies. *Second*, members who do not want to “burn bridges” with an employer frequently tell their bosses they are receiving a better salary in their new position. *Third*, if the individual is making more money in his or her new position, it is easy to say they left for a higher salary. *Finally*, relying on salary increases allows executives to give a simple answer to a potentially complex problem without making any hard analysis of the problems or conditions within their agencies.

Money was not a motivator, but absence of money was a de-motivator. When an individual did not have enough money to pay his or her expenses, salary became more important. “As a general rule of thumb, persons who are struggling to pay their bills will leave for less than a 5 percent increase in salary. Unhappy employees will leave for 5 percent and satisfied employees generally require a 20 percent increase before they consider resigning” (Branham, 2005, p.25). The issue of compensation was more inclusive than just salary and includes a number of benefits such as health insurance,

vacation leave, housing allowance and retirement benefits. Deficiencies or perceived inequities in any of these areas can contribute to turnover.

- *Poor Supervisors or Leadership* – Kaye and Sharon as cited in Orrick (2008), propound that people do not leave jobs, they leave managers. The number one internal factor affecting a member's decision to stay or leave a job is the relationship with their immediate supervisor. One of the greatest crises facing law enforcement communities in the near future is the failure to develop leadership potential of officers throughout the entire organisation. Too often members are promoted to a supervisor position and not given any training of how to effectively perform their new responsibilities. As a consequence, they treat members the same way they saw their supervisors treat officers and other ranks in the past.
- *Poor Job Fit* – According to Orrick (2008), another contributor for members' turnover is a poor person-job fit. Even though the individual has the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the job, many do not like the work or fit within the department. Several states have found that at least 25 percent of officers and other ranks leave their department within the first three years on the job. Supervisors often hear the member say, this job is not what I thought it was. This same person may work very well in another department; they just do not work well within that particular division.
- *Higher Ordered Needs* – In recent years, the law enforcement profession has placed emphasis on the professionalism of working within law enforcement agencies; divisions spend enormous efforts attracting better educated and well-rounded individuals, since past recruits have satisfied lower-ordered, motivational needs of food, water, shelter and safety/security (Orrick, 2008).

Orrick (2008), expressed that today's applicants are looking to satisfy higher-ordered, *hygiene needs* of belongingness, self-esteem and self-actualization. Despite this, many departments' organisational cultures have not evolved beyond the survival mentality aspects of law enforcement work. Basic and advanced training classes emphasize the need to go home at the end of the day as a measure of success. This is not to minimize the dangerous aspects of a career in law enforcement or the need to exercise appropriate care in performing their duties in a safe manner.

The members being recruited today are seeking challenging work environments and problem solving opportunities. When these needs go unmet for an extended period of time, it causes internal conflict for the individual. Because of this, when officers and other ranks who possess higher-ordered needs are placed in an environment that constantly focuses on the lower-ordered needs, the individuals will soon look for work environments that offer those opportunities and conditions (Orrick, 2008).

- *Dysfunctional Organizational Cultures* – Many law enforcement communities are still characterised by silo management styles, hierarchical organisational structures with a dependence on strict operational procedures. This compliance, rule-based environment is based upon a transactional leadership style. Staff members today are seeking an intrinsically motivating work environment. To achieve this, leaders must engage the minds and hearts of their members. Officers must take ownership of the various projects in which they are assigned to participate. When leaders fail to do this, they are limiting the organisation's success and thus contribute to the turnover problems within their department (Orrick, 2008).
- *Lack of Career Growth or Better Opportunities* – Officers often cite limited opportunities to grow or move up as a reason for leaving their current position. For years, larger departments have successfully used more opportunities in a larger

agency as a way to poach exceptional officers from smaller departments (Orrick, 2008).

- *Inadequate Feedback* – According to Orrick (2008), providing frequent feedback is a critical link to having a contented workforce. Employees want to know how they are performing and are anxious to improve. Supervisors who do not provide frequent feedback allow poor work habits to form that result in unnecessary mistakes, citizen complaints, and managerial problems.
- *Inadequate Recognition* – Orrick (2008), asserts that positive reinforcement is the easiest, least expensive and best way to improve good performance. When individuals do not receive this recognition, the exceptional performance will likely diminish.
- *Inadequate Training* – Law enforcement officers' work environment is constantly changing and providing new challenges. Training is critical for providing officers and NCOs with the skills they need to achieve their personal career objectives. When members do not receive sufficient training, they make more mistakes, and feel less confident. Today's members view training as an opportunity to improve their skills and make them more effective. Departments that ignore this need are failing to meet the individual's desire to improve. If the department does not provide these opportunities, members will look for departments that will (Orrick, 2008).

These problems can be addressed and solved in advance; however, many organisations fail to do this because they do not have any procedure to explore signs of dissatisfaction at early stage. The staff members who are unhappy with their jobs have no chance to communicate their opinions and feelings with management and naturally will try to seek for a better working place elsewhere.

2.2.3.4 Pull factors

While push factors are internal problems that derive from within the organisation, pull factors are those forces that come from “rival” employers (Torrington et al., 2005 as cited in Asiamah, 2011). A good team of talented staff members has always been the desire of every employer, while real talents available in labour market are limited. Attracting members that currently work for the competitors does not only bring human resource benefit to the organisation, but also create disadvantages to its rival. Frequently, the members decide to leave or stay after considering which decision is more beneficial to them. The most common reasons are better compensation, which enables the member to enjoy better living standards. However, financial benefit is not always the only reason. Superior working atmosphere, chance to work with particular people or interest in changing the working field may also be the reasons for departure.

Torrington et al., as cited in Asiamah (2011), state that in order to avoid losing talents because of these pull factors, the organisation has to pay strict focus to two main lines. First, strong awareness of what rivals are offering is significant for adjusting current offering packages accordingly. The second requirement is to ensure that the members are satisfied and appreciate their current benefits. This calls for effective communication with the member to listen to their expectations and help them aware that the unique benefits the organisation is providing cannot be found in any other places

Information about the reasons members leave is often difficult to establish. Most commentators suggest exit interviews- short interviews with leavers to ask their reasons of leaving. The shortcoming of this method is that there is no certainty whether these members tell the truth or not and in most cases they hesitate to reveal the really reasons (Torrington et al., 2005 as cited in Asiamah, 2011). Though, exit interviews can be helpful and more

effective if conducted sensitively and confidentially by human resource department instead of other departments, to create the most comfortable atmosphere for the leavers.

2.2.4. Consequences of turnover

According to Mobley (1982), the consequences of turnover may be at either organisational or personal levels having both positive and negative consequences. Negative consequences to organisations includes, cost both tangible like recruitment and selection, training and development and intangible cost such as moral impact, stimulation of further turnover, impact of work load, disruption of team and distraction of job performance. Edward (2011), asserts that, “when a valuable employee leaves, it cost the employer money possibly up to a third of the employee’s annual salary” (p.18). Positive consequences include dislocation of poor performer, improvement, flexibility, adaptableness, conflicts resolutions and a reduction in other withdrawal behaviours.

Negative consequences to individuals include the high expectation which may not be materialised, losing seniority and disruption of social life. Positive consequences include higher income, job challenge, escape from stress environment. Cole (1997), articulates that high labour turnover in an organisation to adverse consequences of poor recruitment and selection exercise. He noted that not only does this lead to increased direct cost, nevertheless it has a disruptive effect on the use of managerial time.

Abbasi and Hollman (2000), described excessive turnover as often engenders far reaching consequences and at the extreme, may lead to jeopardy of the organisation's objectives. There may be a brain drain that negatively affects innovation and causes major delays in the delivery of services and the introduction of new programmes. The smartest and most talented employees are the most mobile and the ones who are disproportionately more likely to leave. For some departments and agencies of government entities, the loss of key employees may negatively impact the quality and innovation of services delivered. As a result, it may

adversely affect the satisfaction of citizens/customers. A strategy should be adopted to acquire, utilise and retain the organisation's human resource base. This should be done to get the right people, with the right skills, in the right numbers, in the right places, at the right time and at the right cost.

2.3 Retention

The word "retention" signifies a state where by employees of their own free will decide to work and stay with their organisations. Starling (2010), said that the key to retaining good workers is to provide an environment that is rewarding and flexible both financially and personally. It is found that once reasonable pay compatibility is achieved, a non-monetary issue becomes more important. Most of the factors that cause people to stay or leave an organisation are under the control of their immediate supervisor. People want training, career development opportunities, open communication and flexible work arrangements as well as competitive benefits.

Chaminade (2007), describes retention as a voluntary move by an organisation to create an environment which engages members for long term. It is the process of keeping adequate numbers of suitable personnel in the military, in order to meet the needs of the force. Browell (2003), defines employee retention as "keeping those staff members that one wants to keep and not losing them from the organisation for whatever reason, especially to the competitors" (p. 5).

Griffeth and Hom (2001), explain that employee retention involves taking measures to encourage employees to remain in the organisation for the maximum period of time. According to Sue (2001), as cited in Asiamah (2011), organisation needs to have right people with the right skills and abilities in the right place and at the right time. This depends on planning, effective recruitment and selection, training and development as well as retaining those you want to keep. To Sue as cited in Asiamah, employee retention is tantamount to

employee motivation. A motivated employee will be satisfied and, therefore, be more productive and more likely to stay within the organisation all other things being equal.

The main aim of retention is to prevent the loss of competent members from the organisation which could have an adverse effect on operational and service delivery (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Muchinsky and Morrow (2010), clarify that the problem of turnover can be addressed through a variety of pro-active retention strategies such as workplace policies and practices which increase employee commitment and loyalty. The objective of any organisation is not only to recruit personnel but also to maintain, develop, train and retain such manpower. This is done to get the right people, with the right skills, in the right numbers, in the right places, at the right time, at the right cost and do the right job.

2.4 A comparative analysis of international retention strategies

Employee retention should be one of every company's objectives. Creating effective employee retention strategies can go far toward helping the organisation meet its goals. Orrick (2008), claims that the overarching goal of any department's retention efforts should be to maximize factors pulling employees into an organisation while limiting the factors pushing employees out of the department.

According to Gberevbie as cited in Mapolisa (2015), retention strategies are viewed as personnel retention strategies which denote a means, plan or set of decision-making behaviours put in place by organisations to retain their competent workforce. Retention of highly skilled members has become more challenging for military leaders as this category of staff members frequently move from one job to another as they are being attracted by more than one organisation at a time. Bidisha and Mukulesh (2013), assert that there is no single strategy or retention plan which may satisfy each and every employee in an organisation. As employees have different personalities as such they have different demands and expectations from the organisation.

A traditional retention practice is no longer adequate to retain the necessary military personnel to ensure the stability of readiness requirements. Countries such as Spain, who have relatively recently transitioned from a conscript to an all-volunteer force, are seeking alternatives to the traditional approaches of retention of key personnel. Similarly, conscript countries such as Turkey face the same difficulties as those faced by their all-volunteer counterparts (“Recruiting and Retention of Military Personnel: An International Perspective,” 2007).

In the manual “Recruiting and Retention of Military Personnel: An International Perspective” (2007), it is stated that the common reasons individuals have reported for either not considering a military career or deciding not to re-enlist include:

- External competition for labour supply pool;
- Military not “top of mind” career;
- Recruit quality;
- Quality of life;
- Compensation; and
- Family considerations

The manual “Recruiting and Retention of Military Personnel: An International Perspective” (2007), postulated that the solutions to the problems cited above are common across countries with one or more of the following programs having been implemented across the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) countries:

- Increases in pay and benefits: to retain good members, departments must provide competitive salaries that match or exceed the market average. Compensation, however, means more than just salaries. Compensation packages include benefits other than salary including health insurance, retirement, leave, schedules, and equipment.

- Guaranteed training programs: today's staff members view training as a highly regarded benefit and an issue of career development. Staff members who receive increased levels of training feel valued and are more likely to stay.
- Family care and quality of life programmes.
- Improved selection and classification metrics to ensure better person-organization and person-job match.
- Targeted advertising.
- Lowering entry standards.
- Educational incentives.
- Retention bonus programmes and
- Varying contract length.

In "Recruiting and Retention of Military Personnel: An International Perspective" (2007), it is stated that these practices while meeting short-term objectives can have negative long-term and costly consequences. Unquestionably retention is a very complex issue and there is no single solution to it. A key objective of the "HFM-107/RTG-034" was to identify common retention problems, barriers, research requirements and proposed solutions. In order to effectively do so, a general understanding of the individual country retention practices was necessary.

2.4.1 A comparative study of retention strategies

A comparative study of retention strategies in NATO countries underpinned the focus of this study. To understand the individual country retention practices, the study attempts to compare various "retention strategies" adopted by two select NATO countries, namely: Belgium and United Kingdom (UK). These two countries were selected to provide a wide range of better understanding of various retention strategies adopted by NATO countries, since most of NATO countries are sharing same retention strategies. The importance of retaining military

personnel is highlighted in this study. The proceeding sections provide a brief overview of the military retention requirements, practices and specific initiatives that Belgium and UK have implemented from the general list of solutions described in page 25.

2.4.1.1 Retention of military personnel: Belgium

As discussed by Lescreve and Schreurs (2007), two major reasons which prompt members to leave the military prematurely are: the attractiveness of alternatives outside the military and the dissatisfaction about the circumstances inside the military, of course, most decisions to leave are based on a combination of both reasons.

Among members leaving mainly because of the attractiveness of alternative employment opportunities are pilots, information communication and technology (ICT)-specialists, aircraft technicians and air traffic controllers. These highly qualified members can easily find a new job in civilian life when the economy is good. For pilots and aircraft technicians, authors experienced a temporary standstill of their departure due to the worldwide recession of air travel after 9/11. The departure of these highly trained members is a major problem for they are very expensive to recruit and train (Lescreve & Schreurs, 2007).

Lescreve and Schreurs (2007), emphasise that the following retention strategies were introduced in Belgium to reduce the high rate of turnover for highly trained members:

1) Retention bonuses for computer specialists: Computer specialists were paid according to their military rank only. As they can get much better offers in civilian life, large numbers (especially the good ones) decided to leave. It was therefore decided twice to grant them a significant retention bonus.

2) Upgrading air traffic controllers (ATC) to the category of officers: Most of military ATC were recruited and trained as noncommissioned officers (NCO), and were paid according to their military ranks only. Attrition was high because of the existing opportunity to work as

ATC for the civilian authority. To illustrate the discrepancy between the military and civilian wages, they mention the case of an NCO ATC with 13 years of experience who left the military and started to do the same job for Eurocontrol. There, he earned more than the Chief, Head of Defence of the Belgian Forces. In an effort to reduce the problem, it was decided to upgrade the function of ATC to the category of officer. In practice, this means that the existing ATC will get the opportunity to become auxiliary officer (with a limited career) and the new ATC recruits will also become auxiliary officers.

3) *Pay Raise*: A major effort to improve retention consisted of providing a significant pay raise for all military personnel. It needs to be said, however, that this pay raise rather reflects the overall evolution of the wages in Belgium. It cannot be considered an action to highlight the military on the labour market.

4) *Possibility to return after leaving the military*: One of the possibilities a member of the military has after leaving the organisation is simply to come back (within one year). This is useful as it allows military leaders to re-engage a member who did decide to leave, but found out that the grass is not always greener on the other side of the hill. As a drawback of course, this opportunity also lowers the threshold to leave.

5) *Providing daycare for small children*: It has been understood that finding adequate daycare facilities for young mothers in the military was a problem. It was therefore decided to open daycare centers in the larger garrisons. Daycare centers are only open from 7 am till 6 pm. As a result, mothers who have night shifts or are called up for exercises still have to look for other solutions.

6) *Providing psychological support and family care*: Since it gradually became clear that deploying members could be stressful both for them and for their family, a comprehensive system of psychological support for the member of the military as well as for his/her family

was set up. This was primarily done as responsible employer behavior, but undoubtedly has beneficial effect upon the retention of the deployed personnel.

7) *Extension of short-term contracts:* As mentioned earlier, when conscription was suspended it was decided to introduce short-term contracts to maintain an acceptable age structure within the forces. These contracts are available for the three personnel categories: volunteers (soldiers), NCOs and officers. At the outset, applicants had to sign a two years contract. They could extend their contract three times for one year if they hadn't reached the age of 25. In order to make these contracts a bit more attractive and to allow more people to apply, it was decided to allow the applicants to apply until the age of 30 with the possibility to extend their contract for a total of seven years if they hadn't reached the age of 34.

8) *Youth camps and pre-enlistment camps:* One of the major reasons for early turnover resides in the lack of realistic expectations. Two actions which are the organisation of youth camps and of pre-enlistment camps were decided upon. Youth camps are meant for youngsters around 15 – 16 years old. During these camps, they live in military units and follow a programme intended to teach them more about Defence (showing equipment, doing sports, getting first aid training etc.). All activities are led by volunteering military personnel. The pre-enlistment camps were held the week before enlistment and were a very realistic preview of what they would experience once they signed their contract.

9) *Attaching more importance to the applicants' preferences when assigning them to vacancies:* During the classification process of the applicants, one has to balance the relative weight of the applicants' aptitudes for the different trades and their preference for these trades. The importance of the preferences has been increased during the last few years. This results in having more applicants to be assigned to the trade they preferred. It is assumed that this will lower early turnover.

10) Using older instructors: One of the reported causes of early turnover is related to the hard approach of the enlistees by drill sergeants. Usually, these drill sergeants are quite young and prone to display macho behavior. Therefore, an experiment was conducted in which older instructors trained soldiers only. The instructors could easily have been the fathers of the recruits. Their attitude seemed to have been quite different. As a result much less turnover occurred during that experiment.

11) Bonuses for deployment: This measure does not need much clarification. Obviously, the willingness of being deployed would drop enormously if there were no bonuses.

2.4.1.2 Retention strategies: UK

According to Johansen (2006), it has to be remembered that in order to have a fully manned service, the armed forces have to be able to hold onto the people that they have got, and they need to be retained. The demand for aircrew is increasing in the commercial world, which means that retention in the armed forces is crucial. Salaries and civilian lifestyle are more attractive in the airline industry. The transferability of skills also creates major retention problems for pilots. The retention strategies in the UK armed forces are discussed hereunder.

1) Work-life balance: Recently, a top priority for employers has been the work-life balance of employees. People want time for learning, time for family and time for themselves. Increasingly young people have highlighted the fact that family and social life is sacred. If they can attain this work-life balance then they are more likely to be retained in their jobs. Both the “Policy for People” and the “Defence Mission” recognise the importance of families to the success of the armed forces (p. 2G-5).

2) Professional development: Creating the opportunities for advanced training, education and upward mobility is a suggestion by the Royal Navy to increase retention of its engineer officers. Knowing you are going to be invested in by your employer is a motivator to stay.

3) *Better pay and conditions*: If pay and conditions are tackled then it is possible that retention may become less of a problem.

4) *LINKUP and the financial retention initiative (FRI)*: LINKUP was a pilot retention scheme used by the Royal Air Force (RAF) in the UK. It was introduced in May 1999. It refunded pilots with the costs associated with obtaining an Airline Transport Pilots Licence (ATPL) or equivalent, in exchange for an undertaking to serve to at least the 38/16 point. This is either at age thirty-eight or after sixteen years of service. This can mean that pilots are refunded up to £10,000 net of the costs associated with obtaining this license. Whether this scheme has had an effect is unsure as there are far more wide reaching issues. In a study, it was found that quality of life, flying opportunities, pay and remuneration, job satisfaction and stability were more important influential factors. Also, being posted to a preferred location and promotion were influential retention measures.

The financial retention incentive (FRI) was also a scheme that was used to increase retention. It was awarded to all pilots at or beyond their immediate pension point, which is either after sixteen years of service or at thirty-eight years of age, whichever comes later. This was intended to be a short term retention measure while retention in pilots was poor.

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter focused on the theoretical and comparative literature relevant to staff retention strategies. This study found that if appropriate employee retention strategies are adopted and implemented by organisations, employees will surely remain and work for the successful achievement of organisational goals. Retention is the keeping an adequate number of suitable personnel in the military, in order to meet the needs of the force. Therefore, if the strategies discussed in this chapter are taken into account the military would be able to survive in a dynamic environment by treating their staff members as one of their

assets which needs a lot of attention. Staff members are the backbone of any military operations success and, therefore, they need to be motivated and maintained in organisation at all cost to aid the organisation to be globally competitive in terms of providing good services delivery to the nation. And in the long-run the returns on investments on the staff members would be achieved.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methods

The previous chapter focused on the related military and non-military literature relevant to staff retention strategies. This chapter explains the overall method used to collect the data to address the research issues of this three phased study. It starts with the research design and population of the study. It provides information about the sample frame and describes the research instruments, the data collection processes and the type of analysis carried out on each phase of the study as well as the research ethics.

3.1 Research Design

In this study the researcher has employed a qualitative approach. This is so because qualitative research aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reason that governs such behaviour. Therefore, for the purpose of this study qualitative research was considered suitable as a method of eliciting information needed in drawing useful conclusions from the research study.

The benefit of qualitative approaches was that researcher did not start with a “hypothesis” that needed to be proved. Rather, it was an open-ended approach that could be adapted and changed while the research was ongoing, which enhanced the quality of the data and insights generated. This approach has allowed the researcher a degree of flexibility in the conduct of the study as a relationship of trust was developed between the researcher and researched. Hence, qualitative approaches used to investigate the effectiveness of skills retention strategies applied by the NDF.

3.2 Population

The study targeted fifty- two members at the Defence Headquarters that are responsible for the various human resources positions in the aforesaid NDF establishment Windhoek, Namibia.

3.3 Sampling

A sample of twenty five members, of which five were active members comprising of human resources officers in the “middle” management level and senior management level were selected using stake-holder criterion purposeful sampling. In the same way, the twenty skilled people who left the force in 2014, 2015 and 2016 were also selected using criterion purposeful sampling. As propounded by Creswell (2014), “to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) means that qualitative researchers select individuals who will best help them understand the research problem and the research questions” (p. 294). A sample of twenty five members was selected because that would give the in-depth coverage and analysis of the results or the findings.

3.4 Research Instruments

In this study, the researcher used qualitative research instruments consisting of in-depth interviews and documents as the primary instruments of the research.

3.4.1 Primary Sources

The researcher used in-depth interviews to obtain qualitative data (or to gain a deeper understanding of skilled members’ motives). These interviews were normally one-to-one and involved unstructured and open-ended questions that were few in number and intended to elicit views, thoughts, feelings, and opinions from the participants. The advantages associated with the use of this method includes, access to direct data or response from selected respondents, unbiased information and original data.

To validate data or response from selected respondents, the researcher requested permission from Senior Staff Officers Human Resource (SSO HR) to retrieve former NDF members’ personnel files and made comparisons between the reasons given by former NDF members during in-depth interviews and the reasons they have articulated in their statements placed in

their personnel records to see whether there is a correlation between the aforementioned reasons.

3.4.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary data was used as a source of data collection for this study to enable information to be obtained from various related literature. Secondary data was collected from books, various employee retention journals, human resource publications, internets and other writings on effective employee retention strategies, as well as a number of research works that have been published on the subject. The benefits associated with these methods among other sources of data collection are outlined as follow: secondary data is unobtrusive. It would be easily available and the researcher can get it without much struggle, as collecting data and analysing it would save time and effort. Secondary data would be readily available and is usually quite inexpensive.

3.5 Procedures

The researcher personally administered the interview schedule and made arrangements with key stakeholders to set a date for interviews. Moreover, respondents were made aware of the main purpose of the whole research project.

3.6 Data Analysis

The researcher analysed qualitative data to seek meaning from all of the data that was available. Interpretations were arrived at from extracted statements and then clustered into themes to provide full meaning of the experience. In other words, common themes were identified and grouped into categories and analysed them to see whether generalisation has been made by research topic. This is presented in a chapter of findings, and where possible this was presented in the form of tables or models.

3.7 Research Ethics

In carrying out this study, the researcher observed the underlying ethical issue in honour of the participants. The researcher had adequately acknowledged all sources to avoid plagiarism and uphold scholarly ethics of academic honesty and professional transparency. The researcher also observed informed consent, the right to anonymity and confidentiality as well as the right to privacy. As shown below, attention was directed toward ethical issues prior to conducting the study, during the study and after conducting the study. Furthermore, all respondents were approached with fairness, dignity, integrity and respect.

3.7.1 Ethical issues before conducting the study

The researcher obtained a “research permission letter” from the School of Postgraduate Studies at UNAM. In pursuit of the NDF establishment (or institutional) approval, the researcher applied for permission to carry out the research in the Defence headquarters, Windhoek, Namibia from the NDF management. Permission to conduct the research was granted by the CDF. The researcher was therefore able to gain access to directorates as well as identified staff members serving in middle management level, and senior management level by showing them authorisation letters to conduct the study within their premises.

3.7.2 Ethical issues during the study

Research was conducted with integrity and transparency. Participation in the study by participants was voluntary and appropriately informed about the general purpose of the study. The researcher sought voluntarily agreement from the participants to be part of the research. The researcher had sought permission for recording interviews prior to the interview. The participants’ cultural differences, religious and gender were respected. The participants were assured that their identities would not be revealed. This was done so that other NDF members would also not be deterred from participating in any other future research projects.

Independence of research was maintained and where conflicts of interest could not be avoided, they were made explicit.

3.7.3 Ethical issues after conducting the study

The researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality and non-disclosure of names of individuals in the final presentation of findings and analysis. They were informed that the interview schedules and information gathered would be for the sole purpose of completing the research. The research was aimed to maximise benefit for NDF and individuals and minimise risk and harm. The rights, dignity and confidentiality of individuals and groups who participated in the study were respected. The data will be safely stored under lock and will be destroyed after five years as per UNAM policy on research.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the study focussed on the methods of the research. Research method is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. Research design is the conceptual structure within which research would be conducted. Therefore, qualitative approach of data collection was used in testing the research questions concerning the status of the subject of the study.

The research instruments that were used include telephone interviews as well as personal interview. The interview schedule contains a series of unstructured questions which related to the research work to obtaining the first- hand information, and the researcher was main data collection instrument. The primary data was corroborated with literature for in depth understanding of the research objectives. The researcher made sense of data by using a descriptive method to analyse it, and also ensured that the data was trustworthy and reliable.

Observing the principles of beneficence and human dignity ensured that the participants were ethically protected. Integrating ethics into the entire research process, from selecting the research problem to carrying out research goals, and interpretation and reporting research

findings was critical to ensuring that the research process was guided by ethical principles beyond informed consent. The next chapter of the study will focus on the research results and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussions

4.1 Introduction

In order to understand the skills retention strategies applied by the NDF, it was necessary to balance the previous literature review against an empirical investigation carried out in the specific context of retention strategies in the NDF. What has been of concern throughout this study is the fact that there was hardly any empirical research on the retention strategies as it pertained to the NDF. The results of this study were seen as only the initial steps towards explaining the need and importance of the skills retention strategies within the security sector of Namibia. The research results will be presented in the order in which they were presented on the qualitative research instruments. Moreover, where necessary, the results will be presented using tables showing the themes.

4.2 Results

The results of the study were obtained from the two categories comprising of five active staff members serving in the position of middle and senior management levels in the Defence headquarters, Windhoek- Namibia; and twenty staff members who resigned from the NDF, or were transferred to another government O/M/As.

4.2.1 Results from former NDF personnel

All respondents could read and understand the interview schedule questions. Tables have been used in most instances for clarity and ease of understanding the results. Table 1 below consists two columns, of which the left column is representing categories/themes, while the right column reflects results obtained from the respondents. For qualitative research in-depth interview protocols/schedules used for data collection, see Appendix D.

Table 1: Results obtained from former NDF members

Categories/themes	Results obtained from respondents
Enjoyment about working with the NDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High standard of discipline. • Working as a team. • Human resources development capacity. • Training and education opportunities. • Job security.
The challenges of working with the NDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak career development strategies and human resources development focus. • Leadership style and command structures. • Favouritism practised and family separation.
The retention plans in the NDF were not effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no retention policies or strategies in place in the whole government O/M/As.
Applying employee retention strategies was not the best practice in the NDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One cannot say the NDF did not have the best practice in applying staff member's retention strategies, since the whole government does not have retention policies in place.
Reasons for leaving the NDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrong career choice/unhappy working with the NDF. • Qualification not applicable in the force. • Lost interest after working with the NDF for fourteen years. • Seeking professional growth in the area of specialities. • Pursuing a career of interest. • Departmental transfers (offered a high position at O/M/As) • Turndown request for attachment to another NDF establishment close to the institutions of high learning in order to further the study.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unapproved special study leaves with full remuneration as well as study leave in excess of 260 days on 50/50 basis. • Low paid job, NDF pays members according to the military ranks and not to qualifications.
Recommendations on what NDF and staff members should do to address the problem of members leaving the force prematurely	<p>The central government should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft/come up with the retention policy that can guide all O/M/As. Policies on soldiers' retention be set straight and made available to keep them in the force.

Source: (Primary data, 2017)

The evidence from the above table is clear that the respondents felt there were no career prospects within the NDF. The absence of a retention policy is a clear indication of the weak career development strategies and human resources development focus and lack of support from the NDF to look after the wellbeing of the members in the form of career progression, better or market related salary and favourable working conditions. Therefore, it is no wonder then why experienced, skilled and hardworking members are demoralised and resign from the force. The main elements here were the leadership style and command structures, favouritism practise, weak career development strategies and human resources development focus, of which all these aspects were the result of the absence of a retention policy or strategy in the NDF. However, from the discussion later in this chapter it is evident that some of these aspects can be attended to without excessive use of resources or major changes in management strategy.

4.2.2 Results from NDF senior management staff

Table 2 below reflects the themes and responses from senior management staff. The left column of the table designates categories/themes, while the right column displays results from the respondents. For qualitative research in-depth interview protocols/schedules used for data collection, see Appendix E.

Table 2: Results obtained from senior management staff

Categories/themes	Results obtained from the respondents
Skills retention strategies applied by the NDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, the NDF has no unique defined retention strategies that can be applied to retain their competent, experienced and skilled members.
The main reasons for employee turnover in the NDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NDF does not fully motivate their experienced and skilled members. The leadership on one side may favour unexperienced and unskilled staff member and recommend him/her for a higher post. • Salary discrepancies between public sectors and private sectors. • Dissatisfaction with working environment. • Need to be closer to the family. • Unfair treatment by supervisors. • The job did not meet members' expectation. • Experienced and skilled members are feeling undervalued. • Lack of fairness with regard to promotion. • Boredom/lack of challenging work. • Defence force terms and conditions of services. • NDF mixture structures of civilian and soldiers in the fields of support services. • Pay structures (for example, Unified pay structures and Defence pay

	<p>structures).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepotism and favouritism, lack of recognition based on qualifications (diplomas and Degrees).
Retention strategies for retaining skilled staff members that attend academic and development programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NDF does not have retention strategies in place. The service benefits that can be used to retain soldiers are just the same as those that are available across the public sectors (government O/M/As) as being stipulated in Republic of Namibia, Being a Public Servant in Namibia. These benefits include: Remuneration, pension, retirement packages, medical aid, housing, transport allowance, service bonus and leave of absence.
Main challenges that undermine the effectiveness of skills retention strategies in the NDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unavailability of defined retention strategies/policies in the NDF. • Lack of training need analysis to determine individuals' skills needed versus the task at hand or possible future tasks. • Wrong posting of qualified members that leads to frustration and resignation of personnel. • Poor human resources policies • Nepotism practises, favouritism, family relationship and political relationship. • Lack of commitment to serve in the NDF • Salary discrepancies between government and private sector. • Lack of defined motivation methods or tools. • Promotion or placement done according to whom to work with and not who can do the job.
The process of effective employee retention benefits the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective employee retention will benefit the NDF in the cost of staff turnover because it enables the force to be the employer of choice, a highly professional organ of the state and the members will

<p>NDF in the cost of turnover</p>	<p>remain employed for a long period of time. Hence, reducing the cost and time spent on training and hiring personnel with required knowledge and skills as well as costs of replacing members who decide to leave the force.</p>
<p>Key disadvantages of the NDF's failures to retain competent and well trained military members and negative effects to national security in Namibia and beyond</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Disadvantages</u> Namibia will have a weak defence force, knowledge and skills will be lost, retarded development capacity in achieving the force level and force employment strategic objective, weakens the defence culture of joining civil life rather than civilian striving for military life and wasting of resources and tarnish defence force images. • <u>Negative effects to national security in Namibia and beyond</u> Compromising the defence force mission in securing and maintaining the national security because if the situation turns (changes) against their favour, these former NDF members may become rebels' leaders, leaders of narcotic gangs or drug traffickers, and leaders of poaching groups.
<p>Effective employee retention strategy helps NDF to sustain their leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having effective employee retention strategies will help the NDF to sustain their leadership which leads to maintaining of peace and stability that leads to country's sustainable development. • The NDF will ensure the growing of leadership ability and performance perseverance of defence culture. • The NDF will ensure and maintain leadership/management succession plan which leads to leadership continuity and enhance high standard of national security.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable leadership will make NDF a professional force capable of achieving and accomplishing the constitutional mandate and national demands.
<p>Recommendation by senior management staff</p>	<p>NDF should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate unique retention policies for the defence force members as well as to come up with the retention policies for civilian staff members. • Conduct regular exit interviews. • Review human resources policies. • Improve on NDF Terms and Conditions of Services. • Keep their employees well motivated. • Ensure transparency and fair promotion. • Ensure equal opportunity for career development. • Effective communication and feedback. • Improve on conditions of the working environment. • Review the relationship between defence force pay structures and unified pay structures.

Source: Primary data (2017)

The evidence from the above table is clear that the senior management staff felt that the absence of a retention policy is a clear indication of the lack of support from the NDF to look after the wellbeing of the members in the form of transparency and fair promotion, equal opportunity for career development and better working conditions. Thus, it is no surprise then why highly trained and experienced members are discouraged and decided to resign from the NDF.

The main elements here were the unavailability of defined retention strategies/policies in the NDF, lack of training need analysis to determine individuals' skills needed versus the task at hand or possible future tasks, wrong posting of qualified staff members that lead to frustration and resignation of personnel and poor human resources policies. From the discussion below, it is evident that some of these aspects can be attended to without major changes in management strategy.

4.3 Discussions

4.3.1 Discussions on the findings obtained from the former NDF personnel

As illustrated in Table 1, the former NDF members were asked to identify what they have enjoyed most about working with the NDF. In their response, the respondents stated that they have indeed enjoyed high standard of discipline, working as a team, human resources development capacity, training and education opportunities as well as job security among others. This notion is also supported by Johansen (2006), who asserts that creating the opportunities for advanced training, education and upward mobility is a suggestion by the Royal Navy to increase retention of its engineer officers, and knowing once the member will be invested in by the employer is a motivator to stay.

The former NDF members were also asked to indicate what their challenges were, while in their employment by the NDF. Although in the previous question the respondents had indicated that they have enjoyed training and education opportunities, here they revealed that weak career development strategies and human resources development focus, leadership style and command structures, favouritism practises and family separation were the main prevailing challenges in working with the force.

Their notions were corresponding with the thoughts of Orrick (2008), who emphasised that members often cite limited opportunities to grow or move up as a reason for leaving their current position. For years, larger departments have successfully used more opportunities in a

larger agency as a way to poach exceptional people from smaller departments. Orrick (2008), further specified that many law enforcement communities are still characterised by silo management styles, hierarchical organisational structures with a dependence on strict operational procedures.

To Orrick (2008), this compliance, rule-based environment is based upon a transactional leadership style. Members today are seeking an intrinsically motivating work environment. To achieve this, leaders must engage the minds and hearts of their members. Members must take ownership of the various projects in which they are assigned to participate. When leaders fail to do this, they are limiting the organisation's success and contributing to the turnover problems within their departments.

On the question of "why did you believe that the retention plans in the NDF were not effective", the respondents mentioned that there are no retention policies or strategies in place in the whole government O/M/As. However, employee retention should be on every organisation's radar, thus creating effective employee retention strategies can go far toward helping the organisation meet its goals. Therefore, the study found it necessary for the central government to come up with something concrete (the retention policies or strategies) that can guide all O/M/As. In literature review, Orrick (2008), states that the overarching goal of any organisation's retention efforts should be to maximize factors pulling employees into an organisation while limiting the factors pushing members out of the department. Accordingly, retention strategies are viewed as personnel retention strategies which denote a means, plan or set of decision-making behaviours put in place by organisations to retain their competent workforce.

The question of "what was not the best practice in applying employee retention strategies in the NDF" revealed that since the whole government does not have retention policies in place, one cannot say the NDF was not the best practice in applying staff member's retention

strategies because there was no O/M/As where one could make comparisons. However, what is not the best practice in applying employee retention strategies in any organisation is when the retention policy is not meeting or addressing the member's and the organisation's needs. In literature review, Sue as cited in Asiamah (2011), clarified that retention policy is tantamount to employee motivation. A motivated employee will be satisfied and therefore more productive and more likely to stay within the organisation all other things being equal. In the same vein, Samuel and Chipunza (2009), assert that the chief aim of applying employee retention strategies in the organisation is to prevent the loss of competent members from the organisation which could have an adverse effect on operational and service delivery.

The question of "what was your reason for leaving the NDF" identified that the common reasons for leaving the force include:

- Wrong career choice/unhappy working with the NDF.
- Qualifications not applicable in the force.
- Lost interest after working with the NDF for fourteen years.
- Lack of persuasion on career of interest.
- Departmental transfers (offered a high position at O/M/As).
- Turndown subordinates' requisitions for attachment to another NDF establishment close to the institutions of high learning by supervisors.
- Inconsideration of subordinates' application for special study leave with full remuneration as well as study leave in excess of 260 days on 50/50 basis by superiors.
- Low paid job, because NDF pay their members according to the ranks and not to qualifications.
- Seeking professional growth in the area of specialities.
- Greener pastures

This study established that most of the aspects that lead to skilled and experienced members leaving NDF were mainly the internal factors/push factors. This category consists of the factors such as dissatisfaction with job or the organisation that lead to undesirable turnover. Members do not necessarily leave for a single reason. In many cases they decide after weighing different factors, and the mixture of reasons is more complex to define. This notion was supported by Torrington *et al.* as cited in Asiamah (2011), who state that defining the reasons of turnover is one of the most important steps that all security sectors need to take before making decisions of turnover management.

For Orrick (2008), push factors (internal factors) relate with wide range of issues, and these problems can be addressed and solved in advance; however, many organisations fail to do this because they do not have any procedure to explore signs of dissatisfaction at early stage. The members that are unhappy with their jobs have no chance to communicate their opinions and feelings with management and naturally will try to seek for a better working place elsewhere.

Recommendations given by former NDF members: The former NDF Members recommended that the central government should introduce the retention policies that can guide all O/M/As. The NDF as a unique organisation should formulate policies that would help them to maximise the retention of their soldiers, skilled and experienced members for a long period of time. Their recommendations were also mentioned by Griffeth and Hom (2001), who stated that employee retention involves taking measures to encourage employees to remain in the organisation for the maximum period of time.

4.3.2 Discussions on the findings obtained from the senior management staff

As exemplified in table 2. On question of “what skill retention strategies are applied by the NDF to retain its competent, experienced and skilled members”, the senior staff management revealed that the NDF has no unique retention strategies for defence force members. This

idea is correlated with the evidence provided by former NDF members who asserted that there is no retention policy or strategy in the whole government which can guide all O/M/As on how to retain their highly qualified and experienced staff members in their organisations.

The current study suggests that the NDF should introduce some guidelines on how staff members would be retained in order to avoid losing skilled and experienced soldiers. In literature review, Hill (2000), expressed that it can be very expensive to train, house, feed and equip soldiers who, when their commitment ends, take their newly learned skills and use them in a civilian company. This notion was also supported by Edward (2011), who states that “when a valuable employee leaves, it cost the employer money possibly up to a third of the employee’s annual salary” (p.18).

The question of “what according to you are the main reasons for employee turnover in the NDF within the past three years (2014/15/16)”, the senior management staff believed that the main reasons for staff member’s turnover in the defence force were among those indicated in table 2. Some of the reasons stated by the senior management staff in the aforesaid table were matching with those reasons specified by former staff members in table 1. However, during in-depth interviews with the senior management staff, the study revealed that the following reasons: the NDF does not fully motivate its experienced and skilled members, leadership favouring unexperienced and unskilled staff member and recommend him/her for a high post, lack of fairness on part of promotion, experienced and skilled staff members feeling undervalued, defence force terms and conditions of services, NDF mixture of structures for civilian and soldiers in the fields of support services, pay structures (for example, Unified pay structures and Defence pay structures), nepotism and favouritism as well as lack of recognition based on qualifications (diplomas and Degrees) were prominent.

The researcher found that all these problems were experienced as a result of poor or undefined policy guidelines in the system. The researcher’s finding was reinforced by

Bidisha and Mukulesh (2013), who illustrated that the main causes of high labour turnover in a company are poor human resources policies, poor recruitment policies, poor supervisory practices, poor grievance procedures, or lack of motivation. All these factors show that there are no policies in human resources matters. Therefore, one may possibly say the NDF members were not recruited scientifically; promotion policy of the NDF, if any, may not be communicated to the members properly, and consequently the knowledgeable and experienced members decided to leave the force and look for employment elsewhere.

On the question of “what retention strategies are currently already in place for retaining skilled members that attend academic and development programmes”, the senior management staff disclosed that the NDF does not have unique retention strategies in place. The service benefits that could be used to retain soldiers are just those available across the public sectors (government OMAs) as being stipulated in Republic of Namibia, Being a Public Servant in Namibia. These benefits include: Remuneration, pension, retirement packages, medical aid, housing, transport allowance, service bonus and leave of absence.

On the question of “what according to you are the main challenges that undermined the effectiveness of skills retention strategies in the NDF”, the management staff shared the view that the challenges revealed in table 2 were the main issues contributing to ineffective skills retention strategies in the NDF. According to them, the main challenges include: unavailability of well-defined retention strategies in the NDF. Lack of training need analysis to determine individuals’ skills needed versus the task at hand or possible future tasks. Wrong posting of qualified staff members that leads to frustration and resignation of personnel. Poor human resources policies which led to recruitment of wrong people into the system leads to continuance resignation staff members from the force. Nepotism practises, favouritism, family relationship and political relationship; lack of commitment to serve in the NDF; salary discrepancies between government and private sector; lack of defined motivation methods or

tools and promotion or placement done according to whom to work with and not who can do the actual job.

The question of “how does the process of effective employee retention will benefit the NDF in the cost of turnover” revealed that effective employee retention can benefit the NDF in terms of savings on the cost of turnover. The senior management staff affirmed that retaining highly trained members in the NDF would enhance professionalism and make the NDF an employer of choice. This is shown in table 2. Effective employee retention will improve service delivery and cutting unnecessary financial costs on recruiting people with required knowledge and technical skills, time spent for training as well as costs of replacing staff members who decide to leave the force. The problems associated with finding and training new members can be considerable, and the specific workplace acquired skills and knowledge people walk away with can take years to replace.

In regard to the question of “what are the key disadvantages of the NDF’s failure to retain competent and well trained military members and their negative effects to the national security in Namibia and beyond”, the senior management staff indicated that the key disadvantage of the failure to retain competent and well trained military members is that Namibia as a country will have a weak defence force due to lack of experienced and knowledgeable members because knowledge and skills will be lost. It will retard the development capacity in achieving the force level and force employment strategic objective, weaken the defence culture of joining civil life rather than the civilian striving for military life, and also a waste of resources and tarnishing the defence force image.

Failure to retain these members may compromise the defence force mission in securing and maintaining the national security, because if the situation turns, these members may become rebels/insurgents, leaders of narcotic gangs or drug traffickers, and leaders of poaching groups. Therefore, in this way these members may become a security threat to national,

regional, continental and international peace and stability. This notion corresponds with Buzan (1991), who stated that the level and objectives of military threat can take on different levels of importance and the fact that they involve the use of force puts them in a special category when it comes to security.

On the question of “why do you believe that having an effective employee retention strategy will help NDF to sustain its leadership”, the senior management staff explained that an effective employee retention strategy will help the NDF to sustain its technical and management skills. The senior management staff believed that by having effective employee retention strategy in place, the NDF will be enabled to sustain its leadership which leads to the achievement and accomplishment of its tasks of maintaining peace and stability that leads to the country’s sustainable development.

The NDF will ensure the growing of leadership ability and performance perseverance of defence culture. Effective employee retention strategy will help the force to maintain leadership succession plan which leads to leadership continuity and enhance high standard of national security. Furthermore, they believed that if the NDF has effective employee retention strategies, there will be less disruption in attendance and there will as well be less disruption in the workflow when members who have chosen to join the force choose to stay there and choose to make the best of their relationship with the NDF and their co-staff members.

This research has reinforced what senior management staffs believe, that leaders will have a much easier time in doing their jobs because they will not be working against resistance from members who would rather not be there. Working with staffs who are there by choice is a much more enjoyable experience. The focus of these leaders can then be more on coaching, teaching and supporting than on managing, controlling and disciplining. This shift of focus will enable these members to be much happier in their work, reducing turnover among

leaders, reducing difficulties in supervisory performance and significantly enhancing the value leaders bring to the overall equation in the organisation.

These skilled leaders are easy to learn and adapt to new global changes (for example, technological changes). Hence, subordinates or new members would also be able to learn from their leaders who are experienced by sharing knowledge and skills. Additionally, the force will have right people (leaders) with the right skills and abilities. The objective of any organisation is not only to recruit personnel but also to maintain, develop, train and retain such manpower.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented research results and discussions. The whole presentation was guided the research objectives presented in chapter one. The study investigated the effectiveness of skills retention strategies applied by the NDF, and senior management staffs have revealed that the NDF has no unique defined retention strategies that can be applied to retain their competent, experienced and skilled members. This idea correlates with the evidence provided by former NDF members who have also asserted that there are no retention policies or strategies in place in the whole government O/M/As.

On the challenges that undermined the effectiveness of skills retention strategies in the NDF, the study found that unavailability of well-defined retention strategies in the NDF, lack of training need analysis, wrong posting of qualified members, poor human resources policies nepotism practises, favouritism, family relationship and political relationship, salary discrepancies between government and private sector, lack of defined motivation methods or tools and promotion or placement done according to whom to work with and not who can do the actual job were the main challenges.

The key disadvantages of the NDF's failure to retain competent and well trained military members would affect national security in Namibia and beyond. The study revealed that if the NDF fails to retain its competent and well trained military members, these members may become a security threat to national, regional, continental and international peace and stability, hence, creating insecurity in Namibia and beyond. This would also compromise the defence force mission in securing and maintaining the national security. This chapter focused on the overall purpose of the study, results and discussions. The next chapter will look at the conclusions of the study and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

Effective employee retention strategies can go far toward helping the military meet its goals. This notion is reinforced by Ministry of Defence, Defence Policy (2011), which states that maintaining a pool of suitably qualified personnel does not only increase performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation, but also boosts morale and motivation. The previous chapter focused on the overall purpose of the study, results and discussions. This chapter will concentrate on the overall conclusions of the study and provides recommendations for military personnel retention strategies.

5.2 Conclusions

Noticeably, during the period of this study the researcher has reviewed the related military and non-military literature relevant to staff retention strategies, and the information obtained from the aforesaid literature was corroborated with the primary data. In other words, in discussing the research findings, a comparison of the results obtained during the study of the literature review in chapter two was also undertaken with a view to identify similarities and departures from the knowledge gained from the authors.

The findings of this study were based on the four objectives of the study as specified in chapter one. Given the growing needs for the NDF to retain its highly trained and competent members in the face of competition, the findings were also based on the benefits of effective military personnel retention strategies that the NDF should adopt to retain its competent and experienced members, and subsequently reduce the high rate of turnover for highly trained and skilled soldiers in the defence force. As stated in the preceding chapters, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of skills retention strategies applied by the NDF.

The study found that the NDF has no specific retention policies/strategies in place that could be applied to retain their highly trained soldiers. As a result, members who possessed necessary knowledge and skills which were on demand elsewhere in O/M/As and also in private sectors decided to leave the defence force. The study further established that most of the aspects that led to skilled and experienced members leaving NDF were mainly the internal factors/push factors such as dissatisfactions with working environment, unfair treatment by supervisors, lack of fairness with regard to promotion, boredom/lack of challenging work, defence force terms and conditions of services, NDF mixture structures of civilian and soldiers, pay structures (Unified pay structures and Defence pay structures), nepotism, favouritism and lack of recognition based on qualifications (diplomas and degrees) among others. Moreover, members do not necessarily leave for a single reason. In many cases they decide after weighing different factors. In view of the aforementioned findings, it is evident that some of these aspects can be addressed without major changes in management strategy. Hence, this study has highlighted some factors that influenced the retention of experienced and skilled members.

The findings indicated that there is no retention policy in place in the NDF to retain its competent members. The implications for the delay in the formulation of a retention policy are that little or no attention has been given to the cost of losing skilled employees, especially highly trained members. It is important for the NDF policy makers to first have a full understanding of the organisational and financial investment the NDF has in its members. As highlighted earlier in this study, there is a common view that experienced and skilled members are not easily replaceable compared with those who are not skilled members.

The researcher is of the view that often there is a tendency within the NDF to focus on the short-term costs of replacing the member and ignore the investment that has compounded over the years. Much of the knowledge, skill and experience a member possesses can only be

acquired on the job. Therefore, when a member is recruited by an external organisation and leaves the force, the knowledge and experience the NDF invested in such an individual member is lost forever. Hence, this investment serves as a substantial boost to the new employer.

For the NDF to survive in today's ever increasing competition, where experienced and knowledgeable employee poaching is on the rise, it is essential to retain its experienced members and keep them committed towards the organisation. This could be comprehended by introducing reforms that will benefit the members by creating a career path for the members, constantly monitoring that all members attend advanced training to enhance their performance capacity, rewarding and recognising members for exceptional performances, paying members a market related salaries, and providing members with a favourable working environment as well as introducing rotation of responsibilities within the force.

The findings of the current research suggests that the NDF should seek applicable measures to mitigate the disclosed challenges, because if the identified challenges are not addressed and the NDF continued without defined retention strategies or policies, not addressing salary discrepancies between military and civilian, and senior members continue doing such practices, the skilled and experienced members may continue to leave the force and look for other employment elsewhere. This means that when NDF loses members, it loses skills and experience. The magnitude and nature of these losses are critical management issues, affecting service delivery and service quality.

The NDF leadership should introduce relevant strategies to mitigate the retention challenges in the force. This view is also strengthened by Abbasi and Hollman (2000), who propounded that a strategy should be adopted to acquire, utilise and retain the organisation's human resource base. In the same vein, this notion was also supported by Muchinsky and Morrow (2010), who assert that the problem of turnover can be addressed through a variety of pro-active retention

strategies like workplace policies and practices which increase employee commitment and loyalty. This should be done to get the right people, with the right skills, in the right numbers, in the right places, at the right time, at the right cost and doing the right job.

5.3 Recommendations

The two researched categories, the former NDF personnel and senior management staff recommended that the MoD/NDF as a unique organisation should:

- Formulate a retention policy for the defence force members that would maximise the retention of competent and experienced soldiers for a long period of time.
- Review human resources policies (focusing on recruitment, promotion and career development policies).
- The MoD has to do more in terms of making funds available to the NDF to enable management teams provide facilities necessary for defence force member's retention.
- Improve on NDF Terms and Conditions of Services (to include competitive incentives, remunerations, awards, allowances and medals). Showing concerns for soldiers' welfare and actualizing the best retention policies may produce the desired results.
- Review the relationship between defence force pay structures and unified pay structures.
- Ensure transparency and fair promotion. Promotion of deserving NDF members should be affected without undue delays especially if such members have met minimum standards for promotion.
- Ensure equal career development opportunity for NDF members to encourage their retention.
- Conduct regular exit interviews and adopt always proactive retention policies based on emerging needs. In this regard, military personnel's views about turnover should regularly be sought and the challenges constantly addressed.

- Benefits and rewards be clearly defined and documented.
- Keep employees well motivated.
- Ensure effective communication and feedback.
- Improve the conditions of working environment.
- The NDF can learn from counterpart military organisations in the region, continent, and global strategies adopted to encourage military personnel retention and adopt same.

The above recommendations were reinforced by Lockwood (2006), who describes retention as a critical element of an organisation's more general approach to talent management, which is defined as "the implementation of integrated strategies or systems designed to increase workplace productivity by developing improved processes for attracting, developing, retaining and utilising people with the required skills and aptitude to meet current and future business needs" (p.2). The recommendations made by the former NDF personnel and senior management staff can assist the NDF leadership in drafting effective employee retention strategies. If the NDF takes in to account and work on the recommendations provided by these two researched categories, it will become an employer of choice, and it will be able to uphold its skilled and highly trained members. This notion was stimulated by Herman and Gioia (2000), who proclaimed that the phrase "Employer of Choice" has picked up a considerable amount of popularity lately, but most employers really do not understand the importance of becoming an Employer of Choice.

The phrase is more than just a buzzword; it is representative of a whole new design of corporate culture. It means that people will choose to work for you. It means that people will choose to really dedicate themselves to your success. It means that people will choose to stay even when they are being courted by recruiters from other employers—recruiters with exceptionally attractive inducements (Herman & Gioia, 2000). However, if the NDF does not

genuinely act to become an employer of choice then highly skilled and experienced members will simply vote with their feet and move to a forward thinking employer who offers them what they want. Hence, being an employer of choice is more than marketing gimmickry.

These strategies are just the beginning toward creating a strong committed work force. The real challenge then, for the NDF, was to retain experienced and skilled members. In addition, the loss of experienced and competent members cripples the functioning of the wider security sector in Namibia.

5.4 Recommendations for further research

Since the researcher's study was limited to an investigation into the effectiveness of skills retention strategies applied by the NDF, it is recommended that further studies be carried out in this regard.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research permission letter

FACULTY OF SCIENCE: SCHOOL OF MILITARY SCIENCE

Dr Vincent M. Mwangi: Senior Lecturer/Associate Dean

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia

340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pioneerspark

☎ +264 61 206 4843; Fax: +264 61 206 3791; E-mail: vmwange@unam.na; URL.: <http://www.unam.edu.na>



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

29 May 2017

This letter serves to confirm that Imanuel Mwashekele Ruben (**Student No: 200600109**) is a final year candidate for the Master of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies (MASSS), Faculty of Science, School of Military Science. In this regard the student is required to conduct a research project as part of the requirement to complete the Master's program successfully. The topic of the thesis is **An Investigation into the Effectiveness of Skills Retention Strategies applied by the Namibian Defence Force (NDF)**.

Therefore, the University of Namibia is requesting your good offices to grant the student all the necessary assistance for him to obtain information required to write his thesis. The research findings will be used for the masters study purpose only and the participant opinions/views will be kept confidential.

Thank you for the support

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V.M. Mwangi", is written over a horizontal line.

DR.V.M.MWANGE
ASSOCIATE DEAN: SCHOOL OF MILITARY SCIENCE



Appendix B: Request for permission to conduct an academic research project in the

Namibian Defence Force

Tel: (061) 204 2142
Cell: 0812939042
E-mail Address: imanuelruben@gmail.com

Lt Col IM Ruben
P.O. BOX 61492
KATUTURA
June 2017

Chief of the Defence Force
Private Bag 13307
WINDHOEK

General Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECT IN THE NAMIBIAN DEFENCE FORCE

I am 17038613 Lt Col Imanuel Mwashekele Ruben (Student No: 200600109), a final year student for the Master of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies (MASSS), Faculty of Science, School of Military Science. My topic of interest (thesis) is **An Investigation into the Effectiveness of Skills Retention Strategies applied by the Namibian Defence Force.**

Therefore, I am hereby modestly requesting the Chief of the Defence Force to grant me a permission to conduct an academic research project within the Defence Headquarters Windhoek, to complete the Master's program successfully. The research findings will be used for the master's study purpose only and the participant opinion/views will be kept confidential.

**IMANUEL MWASHEKELE RUBEN
CANDIDATE FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES (MASSS)**

Appendix C: Research permission letter granted by the Chief of the Defence Force



NAMIBIAN DEFENCE FORCE

Tel: (061) 204 9111 X2191

Fax: (061) 204 2124

E-mail Address: cdefence@mod.gov.na

Enquiries: Major H STwaitavela

Our Ref: CDF/3/2/5/16... Your Ref:.....

Chief of the Defence Force

Private Bag 13307

WINDHOEK

09 June 2017

Lt Col IM Ruben
P.O. Box 61492
Katutura

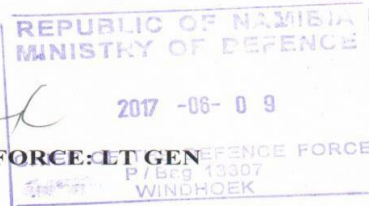
ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECT IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE/NAMIBIAN DEFENCE FORCE

Your letter of request dated 08 June 2017 about the above subject matter refers.

Permission is granted to conduct research in the Ministry of Defence/Namibian Defence Force Headquarters on the "Effectiveness of Skills Retention Strategies applied by the Namibian Defence Force".

Directorates in the DHQs will be informed accordingly. However, you should make prior appointment when ready to visit certain Directorates, Divisions and Individuals of your choice.


JOHN MUTWA
CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE: LT GEN



All official Correspondence must be addressed to the Chief of the Defence Force

Appendix D: Former NDF personnel’s general qualitative in-depth interview protocols/schedules

This in-depth interview schedule was designed to examine the effectiveness of skills retention strategies applied by the NDF as an academic exercise. The researcher was a second year student undertaking a Master of Arts in Security and Strategic Studies (MASSS) at the University of Namibia (UNAM) in Windhoek, Namibia. The interview schedules and information gathered was for the sole purpose of completing a research study required for the completion of the programme. The researcher assured total confidentiality and none disclosure and/or reference to individual in the final presentation of the findings analysis.

As a respondent, your opinions, ideas and insights are most important to our understanding of the effectiveness of skills retention strategies applied by the NDF. This survey took about 30 minutes to complete.

QUESTIONS:

Section A: Personal details

1. What was your job position in the NDF?.....
2. How long have you been at that post?.....
3. Highest Qualification

Certificate	Diploma	Degree	Postgraduate	Others, Specify
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SECTION B: General questions on the effectiveness of skills retention strategies applied by the NDF

4. What did you enjoy most about working with the NDF?.....

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5. What were your challenges working with the Namibian Defence force?.....

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6. Why did you believe that the retention plans in the NDF were not effective?.....

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7. What was not the best practice in applying employee retention strategies in the NDF?

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9. What was your reason for leaving the NDF?.....

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10. In your own words, please provide recommendations on what NDF and staff members should do to address the problem of members leaving the force prematurely.....

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Thank you for your time, participation and contribution.

Appendix E: Senior Management staff’s general qualitative in-depth interview protocols/schedules

QUESTIONS: General in-depth interview questions on the effectiveness of skills retention strategies applied by the NDF

1. What skill retention strategies are applied by the NDF to retain its competent, experienced and skilled members?.....

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2. What according to you are the main reasons for employee turnover in the NDF within the past three years (2014/15/16)?.....

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3. What retention strategies are in place for retaining skilled staff members that attend academic and development programmes?.....

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4. What according to you are the main challenges that undermine the effectiveness of skills retention strategies in the NDF?.....

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5. How does the process of effective employee retention will benefit the NDF in the cost of turnover?.....

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6. What according to you are the key disadvantages of the NDF's failures to retain competent and well trained military members and their negative effects to the national security in Namibia and beyond.....

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7. Why do you believe that having an effective employee retention strategy will help NDF to sustain their leadership?.....

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8. What do you recommend the NDF and staff members should tackle to address the problem of members leaving the NDF prematurely?.....

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Thank you for your co-operation, participation and contribution.