

An institutional analysis of academic talent management in
Malawian universities

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Abstract

This thesis presents an institutional analysis of academic talent management (TM) in Malawian universities. Through this analysis, the thesis adds to our understanding of why organisations adopt (or fail to adopt) TM practices. In particular, the thesis stretches the boundaries of the use of institutional theory in TM studies. It does this by incorporating the role of institutional logics because isomorphic pressures alone do not adequately explain an organisation's actions and decisions on TM. Using the unique context of Malawi's higher education (HE) sector which comprises public, religious and private universities, the study has found that institutional logics combine with isomorphic pressures to explain why organisations within the same context may adopt different TM approaches. In addition to the above the thesis addresses the dearth of empirical studies on academic TM in Africa since TM discourse and practices are shaped by USA and European perspectives.

A qualitative method is adopted for data collection. Data processing and organisation is done in NVivo while template analysis is employed to make sense of the data. The findings are based on three case studies: public, religious and private universities.

Evidence from the cases supports the contextual nature of TM by linking adoption of a particular talent strategy to specific institutional logics and specific pressures faced by differently owned universities. Although it is clear from the cases that TM is not fully developed and entrenched in Malawi's universities, the level of development and application of practices is influenced by each university's unique circumstances. It is therefore possible for organisations within the same sector to respond differently and reject the need to appear homogeneous. Specifically, organisations can display diversity in approach, following institutional logics, to the application of TM practices despite the taken-for-granted notion that organisations that share the same context tend to look more similar and adopt similar practices.

While TM studies have been dominated by USA and European ideas particularly those in business organisations, the contribution of this research is that it fills a specific literature gap and adds its voice to the debate on the contextual nature of TM practices as well as the extent to which isomorphic pressures explain adoption of TM practices. It contends that isomorphic pressures alone do not adequately explain an organisation's decisions and actions regarding TM practices.

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Abbreviations

AIDS:	Acquired Immunodeficiency syndrome
CAQDAS:	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CUTL:	Committee on University Teaching and Learning
EFA:	Education for all
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GER:	Gross Enrolment Ratio
HE:	Higher Education
HEI:	Higher Education Institution
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR:	Human resources
HRM:	Human resource management
HRM&D:	Human resource management and development
MANEB:	Malawi National Examinations Board
MDG:	Millennium Development Goals
MGDS:	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MZUNI:	Mzuzu University
NCHE:	National Council for Higher Education
NCST:	National Commission for Science and Technology
NESP:	National Education Sector Plan
NGO:	Non Governmental Organisation
NSO:	National Statistics Office
PIF:	Policy and Investment Framework

PRSP:	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
TM:	Talent management
UCE:	University Certificate of Education
UK:	United Kingdom
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIMA:	University of Malawi
USA:	United States of America

Chapter 1. Introduction

This thesis presents an institutional analysis of academic talent management (TM) in Malawian universities using institutional theory and institutional logics as lenses. The analysis focuses on the use of TM practices for attraction, development and retention of academic talent in Malawi, a developing country in Africa. By examining TM practices in public, religious and private universities, which, by the nature of their ownership arrangements operate based on different logics, the thesis provides new insights on why organisations implement or fail to implement TM practices and ideas. Located within the growing field of talent management the thesis contributes towards knowledge on academic talent management by focusing on how isomorphic pressures and institutional logics influence TM decisions.

1.1 Background to the study

Talent management has been a key management issue in recent years (Thunnissen et al., 2013a), attracting increasing attention from academics and practitioners (Iles et al., 2010b). According to Beechler and Woodward (2009), talent management represents the drive to find, develop, and retain individuals who have the competencies and commitment needed for their jobs and who can find meaning and purpose in their work. Despite its popularity as a concept, talent management lacks a clear and consistent definition and scope as well as a conceptual framework based on empirical research (Lewis and Heckman, 2006). Further research is required for it to grow to maturity and to gain a firm position in the field of human resource management (Thunnissen et al., 2013a). Despite the dramatic increase of articles with talent management as key word (Iles et al., 2010b), Thunnissen et al. (2013a) conclude that up until 2012 most of the published works on TM were conceptual, focusing on definitions/conceptualisations, intended outcomes/effects, and activities/practices. Furthermore, most developments in the talent management field have focussed on global talent management (De Vos and Dries, 2013) and multinational companies (Garavan, 2012). There is a body of literature that suggests that context is a critical factor to the implementation of talent management practices (Stahl et al., 2007). Just like the business world that has touted the crucial role of

talent management to organisation success, academic talent management is critical to university success.

In today's knowledge economy, universities hold a key position of generating and disseminating knowledge that drives national and global economies. Within universities academic talent is critical to the accomplishment of their mission. The extent to which universities identify and recruit, develop and retain academic talent determines their competitive edge in a highly competitive global environment. Little wonder then that some universities position themselves as talent magnets (Bauder, 2012) in order to attract the best academics. Academic labour, unlike other labour, enjoys a well-developed mobility infrastructure because of its strategic role in knowledge production such that academic mobility incentives represent an economic development strategy (Bauder, 2012). Since staff mobility is accepted as academic practice and as resource rich institutions and countries attract the best scientists and scholars, the departure of these scientists and scholars away from universities is one of the most serious challenges facing most African countries (Teferra and Altbach, 2004) due to lack of mobility infrastructure to attract talent to the continent. For instance an estimated fifty thousand African trained PhDs are working outside the continent (Bloom et al., 2006). It is clear that most of Africa has been hit hard by the negative consequences of academic mobility. As most African universities play catch up to globalization trends coupled with the dearth of empirical studies on academic talent management in Africa, the extent to which universities use talent management practices for attraction, development and retention of academic talent is worth investigating.

The study's findings are based on thirty-eight semi-structured interviews with academics, academic leaders and other managers in public, private and religious sector universities in Malawi. Interviewees were both current position holders as well as those who had voluntarily left the universities. Interviews were supplemented by documentary reviews. Data was collected over a six-month period between August 2014 and February 2015. Methodologically, soliciting views on talent management from individuals who are not human resource management practitioners provides a different and unique perspective since most studies on TM use those that manage their organisations' human resource function as participants.

Additionally, the inclusion of those who voluntarily left their universities provides richness to the findings.

1.2 Overview of the empirical case: Malawi's academic labour market

Malawi's academic labour market faces recurrent challenges of attraction, development and retention of academic talent. Labour migration to better surrounding economies and beyond has led to persistent calls for universities to take a more serious view of staff development programmes (Kambalmetore, 1973) and retention (Dzimhiri, 2008). Even within the country those who would be interested to teach in the university find other sectors of the economy, such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), more attractive (Kambalmetore, 1973; Holland, 2010). Those that choose to remain in academia find themselves diverted from academic endeavours to dealing with personal economic survival (Kerr and Mapanje, 2002). For instance, Holland (2010) found that academics in Malawi invoke the theme of survival to justify consultancy work although they admitted that it had a negative impact on teaching and scholarship. While consultancy work is expected of an academic in Malawi, the one referred to by Holland (2010) above relates to work not officially declared by the academic to university authorities. Such is the level of financing across universities that they fail to offer competitive and retentive pay packages for their academic talent. As an emerging academic labour market, Malawi mirrors academic labour markets of many developing African countries. Public universities dominate provision of higher education and government involvement in university affairs is the norm (Teferra and Altbach, 2004).

In terms of academic talent development through further training, most African universities rely heavily on external providers due to shortage of highly qualified faculty members. With most universities in Africa having less than fifty percent of academic staff with PhD qualifications (Hayward, 2010), Malawi's situation is worse. Less than 30 percent of academics in Malawi's public universities have PhD qualifications. For religious and private universities the proportion goes down to ten percent or less. Hayward (2010) contends that lack of PhD level faculty is a serious

impediment to the growth of graduate programmes and research profiles of the affected institutions. Reliance on external training providers, while enriching the experiences of the talent involved and their home institutions if they return, may not be sustainable. Such a model, according to Olukoshi and Zeleza (2004), has contributed to brain drain as large numbers of students do not return after graduation. The dilemma for Malawian universities, like many in Africa, is the lack of resources to support sound graduate programmes (Olukoshi and Zeleza, 2004). They are left to contend with reduced capacity due to academic talent mobility as resource-rich institutions and countries position themselves as talent magnets, attracting and retaining the best academic talent.

1.3 Rationale for the research

The available body of literature shows a number of theoretical and practical areas within TM that require further investigation. To begin with, there is little empirical work since much of the work on TM has been conceptual (Thunnissen et al. 2013). Secondly, following from the first, most developments in the TM field have focussed on global TM (De Vos and Dries, 2013) and multinational companies (Garavan, 2012). Thirdly, TM literature is dominated by western models and conceptions, and little or nothing on Africa, yet one of the biggest challenges facing African universities is holding on to their academic talent (Teferra and Altbach, 2004; Bloom et al., 2006). It is a challenge that requires practical solutions to favourably compete for talent. Finally, Africa's academic labour market, dominated by public universities for decades, is experiencing dramatic changes with the mushrooming of religious and private universities, all of which need to find appropriate responses to the academic talent challenge. It also needs to be stated that unlike public universities which operate based on logics of collegiality and little or no concern on costs since they are state-funded, religious and private universities are largely driven by business-like logics because of the nature of their financing mechanisms. The academic talent challenge is further heightened by the unique nature of academic labour markets (Bauder, 2012) globally in which resource-rich countries and institutions enjoy investments in mobility infrastructure.

1.4 Research questions

The main objective of this thesis is to investigate the extent to which universities in developing countries use TM practices in attracting, developing and retaining academic talent. Through this objective the research explains how and why universities make particular TM decisions. It therefore generates a novel body of empirical data about the extent of use of TM practices in an African context, extends the use of institutional theory beyond global TM and multinational corporations to a focus on TM in a unique institutional context, and increases our understanding of emerging academic labour markets' responses to competition for academic talent. In order to actualise the stated objectives the following research questions were developed:

- How do universities conceptualise, identify, develop and retain academic talent?
- In turn, why do the universities adopt particular TM practices and to what extent are they similar in approach?
- To what extent, and how, does a university's 'institutional logics' shape the adoption of various talent management practices?

The study's key theoretical contribution is that isomorphic pressures do not adequately explain an organisation's decisions on TM practices. The findings show that failure to mimic another's TM practices was due to the existence of a different set of institutional logics. It therefore follows that combining institutional theory (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015) with institutional logics provides a more robust explanation as to why homogeneity for organisations in the same 'context' may not occur. It makes another contribution towards research practice in TM by extending Cooke et al.'s (2014) contribution on the need to broaden the range of interviewees in future studies in order to inform practice on the basis of ideas obtained from multiple stakeholders instead of only targeting HR practitioners/ managers as key respondents.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The rest of the thesis is organised as follows: Chapter two is a review of existing literature and debates on TM. It begins with the origins and conceptualisation of talent and TM. From its origins in money (Silzer and Dowell, 2010) and based on the

notion of differentiation (Ross, 2013) the chapter explores the different ways in which the terms are defined and how practice or implementation is shaped by conceptualisation. Having detailed the relevance of TM to businesses, a specific case for TM in academia is built based on the notions of collegiality versus managerialism and globalization versus academic mobility as some of the key issues confronting academic labour markets. Following an exposition of talent management theory and choice of institutional theory and institutional logics to provide a guiding framework for the present study, the chapter emphasizes the need to recognize the role of context in talent management practice.

Chapter three situates the study in the context of Malawi. It highlights talent management related issues that shape Malawi's academic labour market and draws parallels with most of Africa. The chapter is aimed at providing a solid contextual understanding of the specific academic labour market under investigation. This context is relevant as, through it, the study seeks to show how context in the practice of talent management matters, particularly in recognition of the three different ownership arrangements of universities in Malawi, namely, public, religious and private ownership.

Chapter four provides a detailed methodological approach used in order to actualize the study's objective. It details the study design, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations. In its detailed narrative of the adopted case strategy and methods the chapter provides justification for the decisions taken.

Chapter five is the first of three empirical chapters. It presents a detailed examination of TM practices in a public university. This public university case aids our understanding of TM practices because of its privileged position in Malawi's higher education sector. Findings from this case will shed more light on the kinds of isomorphic pressures and institutional logics that operate on a university that relies on government funding for its operations. Furthermore, it is an interesting case because, in addition to being the oldest and largest university, it is based on a federal structure and its formation, following a report on education for development in Malawi by the American Council on Education (The American Council on Education, 1964), was modelled on UK and US institutional forms (Holland, 2010).

Chapter six is the second empirical chapter and focusses on a religious university, one of the earliest non-state funded university education providers. It is an important case in providing a platform on which isomorphic pressures can be assessed with regards to the influence of public university TM practices and logics. It would be interesting to note how its 'church ownership' influences its logics and practices.

Chapter seven is the last of the empirical chapters. Results of this chapter are based on a small private university. Similar to chapter six in terms of what it mostly contributes to the thesis, it is unique in terms of ownership arrangement. Certainly purely private ownership presents opportunities to understand the range of decision points on TM across the higher education sector and the extent to which business logics or the dominance of management are incorporated in universities.

The findings presented in chapters five, six and seven are brought together in chapter eight where they are discussed in relation to the existing body of literature and theory. Through cross case analysis similarities and differences across the three cases are teased out for better understanding of uniqueness in individual cases and generalities in Malawi's academic labour market. Throughout the discussion, the chapter teases out both the practical and theoretical contributions of the thesis.

Finally, chapter nine provides conclusions. It is in this chapter that the thesis summarises key findings, contributions, limitations and areas for further studies. It also provides a reflexive summary of the research process.

Chapter 2 . Talent management

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth review of key literature on talent management and underscores the pertinence of talent management to businesses globally. As a key management issue (Thunnissen et al., 2013b), talent management has attracted increasing attention from academics and practitioners (Iles et al., 2010b), leading to a growing body of literature on the phenomenon. Through an exposition of relevant literature on talent management, the debates on conceptualisation of talent, and a choice of theory the chapter provides the necessary lens for addressing the research questions in the present empirical study.

Firstly, the chapter explores the origins and conceptualisation of talent. This is necessary because of existing ambiguities in definitions and conceptualisation of talent management (Lewis and Heckman, 2006) and also because conceptualisation influences practice (Iles et al., 2010a). It is also important to understand which practices fall within the ambit of TM in view of the TM - HRM debate. Secondly, the chapter highlights the business imperative for TM and provides evidence on why TM seems to be a critical component of businesses today. Thirdly, as a precursor to the context of the study, the chapter situates TM in academia (globally) by examining its relevance in higher education institutions in relation to specific trends experienced in these institutions. Fourthly, the chapter addresses the question of growth of the TM field by examining theories in use in the study of TM. This emanates from assertions like that of Lewis and Heckman (2006) that TM is still in its infancy because, among other reasons, it lacks theoretical grounding. It is therefore a stock-taking of some sort to try and document the growth of the field this far. Finally, the chapter sums up the debate on the relevance of context in the study of TM and implementation of TM practices and ideas. This again seeks to provide additional impetus on the choice of the present study context.

2.2 Talent management: Conceptualisation, practice and the role of context

The term talent traces its origins to the ancient Greeks and biblical times when it was a measure of weight and unit of money. It then progressed in meaning to include a person's value, innate or learned (Silzer and Dowell, 2010). In biblical times talents were mentioned in the parable found in Matthew 25:14-30 which influenced the understanding of talent as ability based on the notion of differentiation (Ross, 2013; Adamsen, 2016). Differentiation means that some people have greater ability than others and therefore the search for talent, based on differentiation, is a search for specific characteristics that project greater ability. The focus on a person's value in conceptualising talent has gained ground over the years. It was popularised by the 1997 McKinsey study (Axelrod et al., 2001) which led to the publication of a report on 'War for Talent'. The report championed a "star" approach which refers to talent as the best and brightest (Beechler and Woodward, 2009). Having examined a severe and worsening shortage of people needed to lead companies, Axelrod et al. (2001) concluded that talent was a critical driver of corporate performance and that a company's ability to attract, develop and retain talent was a major competitive advantage, not only for the present, but far into the future. Having elevated talent to the level of strategic importance the McKinsey study suggested talent management as a combat strategy (Glenn, 2012) in the "war for talent".

As a combat strategy in the war for talent, talent management is defined by Collings and Mellahi (2009:305) as:

Activities and processes that involve systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organisation's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organisation.

The present study adopts this definition because it encompasses a range of activities which are focussed on meeting an organisation's strategic objectives through the attraction, development and retention of talent. The definition's focus on an organisation's deliberate effort in putting in place systematic processes geared

towards achieving or maintaining sustainable competitive advantage, filling of key positions with competent incumbents who are motivated to remain committed to the organisation adds further appeal for its adoption. In adopting the above conceptualisation I agree with the position advocated by Collings and Mellahi (2009) who state that the starting point for any talent management system should be the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to an organisation's sustainable competitive advantage. Having adopted the above definition, it becomes necessary to acknowledge that other definitions of talent management do exist in both academic and practitioner oriented literature (See Dries, 2013; Thunnissen et al., 2013a; Silzer and Dowell, 2010 for an extensive review of the various definitions). What is clear from these multiple definitions is that they converge in their focus on an organisation's strategic needs and activities or practices that organisations pursue in managing talent. Furthermore, a key feature in these definitions is their focus on either people or positions or both as areas where an organisation's effort is directed. Another conceptual issue that requires narrowing down for the purposes of the present study is how extensively the term talent management has been used. This has relevance to the issue of context.

Various authors have used variants of talent management to denote the context within which talent management is being practiced or researched. The variants include global talent management (Schuler et al., 2011; Tarique and Schuler, 2010; Mellahi and Collings, 2010), strategic talent management (Collings and Mellahi, 2009), and academic talent management (Davies and Davies, 2010; Verhaegen, 2005). While global talent management focusses on multinational companies operating in the global economy and therefore interested in individuals who would provide a global competitive edge, academic talent management focusses on academic institutions and what or who is considered talent within the academy. Strategic talent management on the other hand focusses on the strategic nature or benefit of talent management. This strategic focus is key to any conceptualisation be it in academia or the corporate world. The study's use of the term talent management is therefore synonymous with academic talent management in order to focus on the university context in which the present study is situated. The above variants notwithstanding developments in the talent management field have focussed on global talent management (De Vos and Dries, 2013) and multinational companies

(Garavan, 2012). Studying talent management in a different context such as academia aids in how the phenomenon ought to be understood when practiced in a different institutional environment faced with different kinds of internal and external pressures. Another aspect of talent management that requires contextualising is definition of the term.

Lewis and Heckman (2006) observe that despite its popularity talent management lacks a clear and consistent definition, scope and a conceptual framework based on empirical research. The plethora of definitions of the terms talent and talent management has led to difficulties in coming up with an unambiguous definition of talent management (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Iles et al., 2010a). As a result, talent management research has continued with the search for definition of terms among other questions that research in the discipline seeks to answer. Although a definition has been selected above to guide conceptualisation it is by no means definitive of the specific context in which the study is situated. It is only prudent to find out how talent management is conceptualized in specific contexts especially considering that a particular definition or conceptualisation has an influence over what talent management practices an organisation implements and how such implementation takes place (Iles et al., 2010a). For instance, an organisation that considers talent in exclusive terms (Thunnissen et al., 2013a) would have to identify a small proportion of the workforce which is treated differently from the rest in terms of developmental initiatives and opportunities based on their leadership [or other] potential. Otherwise, most definitions of talent management focus on an organisation's strategic needs and activities or practices that organisations pursue in managing talent and are based on whether talent is considered inclusive or exclusive (Thunnissen et al., 2013a) and in terms of people or positions (Iles et al., 2010a). These considerations have been a source of tensions on the exact nature of talent (Dries, 2013). According to Dries (2013) five tensions exist in literature centred on what or who is talent (object versus subject), the prevalence of talent (inclusive versus exclusive perspectives), whether talent is innate or acquired, whether talent depends more on ability or motivation, and the extent to which talent is context-dependent or transferable.

These considerations are what Meyers and Van Woerkom (2014) call underlying talent philosophies, defined as fundamental assumptions and beliefs about the nature, value and instrumentality of talent that are held by a firm's key decision makers.

They identify four distinct talent philosophies based on whether talent is inclusive or exclusive and whether it is stable or developable. According to Meyers and Van Woerkom (2014) the exclusive/stable philosophy takes the 'star approach', dividing the working population into a small group with talent and a much bigger group of people without talent. This is viewed in terms of the Pareto Principle where 20 percent of the workforce contributes 80 percent of the organisation's value (Iles et al., 2010a). The second philosophy is the exclusive/developable talent philosophy. It is similar to the first in terms of isolating a small proportion of workers as talent and the rest as without talent. However, the key difference in the second philosophy is that talent is conceptualised as potential which can be unveiled through development (Meyers et al., 2013). Thirdly, the inclusive/stable talent philosophy focuses on the positive qualities or talents residing in every individual. Finally, the inclusive/developable talent philosophy whose aim is to develop ordinary employees into extraordinary performers is based on the belief that all people have a great capacity to adapt, change and grow (Meyers and Van Woerkom, 2014; Meyers et al., 2013). These philosophies in turn shape talent management practices and impact their effectiveness (Meyers and Van Woerkom, 2014; Dries, 2013; Ross, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013) since conceptualizing talent and talent management in a particular way has ramifications for different stakeholders and their organisations. For instance inclusive approaches, while criticised for not clearly demonstrating the difference between TM and HRM (Lewis and Heckman, 2006), make people practitioners feel comfortable since they are seen to treat all employees fairly by providing equal career or development opportunities (Ross, 2013). In contrast, exclusive approaches and the principle of workforce differentiation, although considered reasonable from a strategic point of view (Gelens et al., 2013) and shown to have positive impact at organisational level (Gelens et al., 2014), have faced criticisms regarding their negative impacts on individuals who may be identified as non-talent or lacking in potential and subjective perceptions of inequality among employees. In terms of talent management practices, implementation can range from a focus on individual practices and activities necessary to achieve intended talent management outcomes to a focus on underlying talent management strategy.

Focussing on an underlying talent management strategy as opposed to individual practices in isolation, Bethke-Langenegger et al. (2011) argue for an integrated talent management process that subsumes human resource management practices. They suggest four possible talent management strategies, as summarised in table 1 below, each containing many distinct practices that form an integrated talent management process.

Table 1 Underlying TM strategies

Talent management strategy	Explanation
Talent management to support the corporate strategy	Sum of activities to support the corporate strategy explicitly (eg: to successfully expand business activities). Linking talent management practices and corporate strategy. Recognizing talent management as part of corporate strategy leading to implementation of companywide talent mind-set.
Talent management to enable succession planning	Using talent management diminishes time spent hiring replacements for leaders and specialists (with internal successors or outside candidates). Proactive internal succession planning reduces transaction costs. Seamless succession may reduce loss of knowledge and enhance work quality.
Talent management to attract and retain talent	Talent management practices ensure that the right people want to join the company. The company knows what talents want and set incentive system in line with their needs. Talents are valued and retained by specialised programmes existing within the company. They get meaningful work combined with special rewards.
Talent management to develop talent	Systematic investment in human capital. Development needs of talents are identified and met in an effective way while career options and paths are offered. Recognises that talents prefer non-material compensations (career perspectives, challenging job content, and scope of action) over monetary compensations and always look out for developmental perspectives.

Source: Bethke-Langenegger et al. (2011).

While Bethke-Langenegger et al. (2011) above focus on the underlying talent management strategies, Silzer and Dowell (2010) note emerging consensus on individual human resource activities that are in the realm of talent management. Although a number of suggestions exist regarding the human resource activities falling within talent management, the individual components approach includes activities that focus on individuals such as recruitment, development, performance management and retention. In order to isolate activities and provide a reference of activities relevant to talent management, Silzer and Dowell (2010) provide a list of human resource activities on the basis of their connection with managing talent in organisations. Accordingly, some of the human resource activities and functions that are usually included under talent management are recruiting, selection, promotion, placement, assignments, retention initiatives, reward and recognition programs (other than compensation), training, development, learning opportunities, coaching, mentoring, performance management, career planning and development, high-potential identification and development, employee diversity efforts, succession management and planning, organisational talent management reviews, measurement and evaluation of talent management efforts. Other activities and functions such as workforce planning and compensation systems are sometimes included under talent management while organisational development and lifestyle initiatives are usually not included. These activities should not be seen as opposed in approach to the one proposed by Bethke-Langenegger et al. (2011) above. Rather the components are more than just independent activities and processes because their effectiveness and success is dependent on whether they are strategically driven and fully integrated with each other (Silzer and Dowell, 2010).

The above individual activities in combination with the underlying TM strategies in table 1 above provide a useful frame for documenting practices or activities that organisations, including universities, implement. If differences in practices or activities exist between organisations, such differences are by way of emphasis or focus. For example Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen (2015) observe that formal TM policies may emphasise growth toward becoming an excellent scholar through the development of traditional academic skills, particularly for early career employees. Such a talent program may consist of systematic and deliberate training and practice through PhD programs available in all departments which may also

include on the job training like paper presentations at conferences, proposal writing, participating in research projects or teaching. Regardless of any differences in emphasis and focus the message that one gets in the literature is that talent management activities and practices are necessary for the achievement of intended outcomes. These activities range from single human resource activities to all HRM subfields (Thunnissen et al., 2013a; Lewis and Heckman, 2006). The above notwithstanding, debate has persisted on whether TM is any different from HRM since the activities that fall under TM are all HRM activities and functions, leading some quarters to conclude that TM is simply a fad or repackaging of HRM. This debate has divided opinion across three streams: that TM is not essentially different from HRM; TM is integrated HRM with a selective focus; and that talent management is different from HRM.

Proponents of the first stream of the debate, that TM is not essentially different from HRM argue that TM is repackaging of old ideas under a new name and appears to add little or nothing to the understanding of how to manage talent strategically (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Iles et al., 2010b; Preece et al., 2011). They argue that many ideas that form the bulk of TM practices date back to the 1950s. The second strand holds that TM is integrated HRM with a selective focus, arguing that TM may use the same tools as HRM but focusing on a relatively small segment of the workforce (Preece et al., 2011). The third stream argues for the recognition of TM as different from HRM. Proponents of this school of thought argue for focus on developing an enterprise-wide, holistic talent mind-set (Mellahi and Collings, 2010). In enforcing the above argument Blass et al. (2008) state that TM is more than HRM, leadership development initiatives or succession planning. They emphasise the need to perceive it as a collective approach to recruiting, retaining and developing talent within the organisation for its future benefits, extending beyond the domains listed above to include strategy, organisational culture and change management. As the debate continues, it is noteworthy that the TM package, whether similar to or different from HRM, offers a fresh perspective to how organisations look at a critical differentiating factor: people. The introduction of the concept of talent mind-set, which is enterprise-wide and holistic, provides insights on the role of both people and contexts as they relate to organisational performance. Regardless of its status in relation to HRM, TM has generated sufficient attention among

practitioners and academics to warrant further exploration in order to address areas that have been identified as requiring further research. It is commonly understood that TM, as suggested by the third stream, offers much more than traditional HRM. In any case, irrespective of the TM strand, organisations that wish to remain competitive continue to review what they are doing in the face of the war for talent. Such reviews incorporate the ever changing context within which organisations operate and how such contexts affect TM practices.

Context, according to Govaerts et al. (2011), needs to be understood as both the social and economic environment as well as the organisation and its specific needs. For instance, at national level the extent to which a country gains or loses talent or high skills is largely dependent on policies adopted by the country at either end of the spectrum (Docquier and Rapoport, 2012). At the institutional level, organisations that buy talents and bring them in from the external labour market compete on the basis of providing excellent conditions and promises of a work environment or context that would challenge talents to give their best. Organisational context, such as direct manager or organisational culture, can have a negative or positive influence on TM (Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen, 2015). As such it is impossible to disconnect talent from its organisational or national context. In view of the context dependence of talent (Govaerts et al., 2011) and the complex nature of performance (Collings, 2014) simply transferring talent from one context to another has not always produced the desired outcomes.

In university contexts, academic recruitment and selection do not occur in a vacuum and therefore need an approach that considers the relevant (inter) organisational context. Research has shown that academic contexts shape organisational practices and processes such as those for recruitment and selection, development and retention of talent. In the Netherlands for example, van den Brink et al. (2013) report that departments are experimenting with tenure track system for young academic talent as a result of tough competition for talent at both national and global levels. Other contextual issues for academia are the differences in structures and rules between national systems such as whether academics are on private contracts, as those in the United Kingdom, or civil servants, like in Germany (Bauder, 2012). It is also possible to distinguish academic contexts that are characterised by early tenure or delayed tenure (van den Brink et al., 2013; Plater, 1998; Cruz-Castro and Sanz-

Menendez, 2010; Dnes and Seaton, 1998). Clearly, existence of different markets will affect TM. A buyer's market (where there are few candidates against many positions) and a seller's market (many candidates against few positions) would require different approaches in recruitment, for example. In concluding the role of context in TM I reiterate Davies and Davies (2010) position that TM is organisation specific and context dependent. What works depends on context and the way the organisation implements practices. The above notwithstanding, it is widely acknowledged that TM plays a strategic role in offering organisations a competitive edge in an era where talent is scarce and mobile. As I will demonstrate in the discussion that follows, there is a clear business case for TM not only in the corporate world but in academia as well. Universities provide a unique case for TM because, among other reasons, mobility has historically been considered an important characteristic of academia (Bauder, 2012). Furthermore, the existing institutional contexts that encase academic practice make academic talent recruitment, development and retention particularly complex. This is particularly so because, although their core business remains teaching and research, modern day universities are multi-faceted and multi-product organisations which are increasingly taking on additional roles (Shattock, 2003).

2.3 The business case for talent management and why it matters in academia

There is growing consensus on the perceived value of TM to organisational success although this link has yet to be empirically established (Collings, 2014). It is widely recognised that the reason many organisations succeed or fail ultimately comes down to talent (Silzer and Dowell, 2010; Boxall and Purcell, 2016). In recognition of the key role that talent plays, Boxall and Purcell (2016) argue that gaining access to people with the kind of talent that organisations need is fundamental to building and maintaining a workforce of an appropriate quality and quantity. In spite of the ambiguities in definitions and debate on its relationship with traditional HRM there is a strong argument on the value of TM to business. Since the purpose of TM is to attract, develop, motivate and retain talent, its outputs and effects are detected at the individual level, the HR subsystem level, and the organisation as a whole (Thunnissen et al., 2013a). The above notwithstanding, business executives have

suggested that TM practices need to lead to measurable financial business results (Silzer and Dowell, 2010). This is a suggestion that limits organisation performance to financial outcomes or shareholder value. As Collings (2014) argues, it is a narrow conceptualisation of performance and it ignores other stakeholders. Obviously, organisation performance needs to be viewed as going beyond shareholder value (Collings, 2014) since organisation performance is a multidimensional construct (Dyer and Reeves, 1995).

When organisation performance is conceptualised in multiple ways, beyond shareholder value, any claims of benefits of TM need to be measured against those multiple success indicators. Bethke-Langenegger et al. (2011) clarify this matter better when they operationalise organisation performance as “a conglomerate of (a) financial outcomes (e.g. company profit or market value), (b) organisational outcomes (e.g. productivity or customer satisfaction) and (c) human resource outcomes (e.g. job satisfaction or commitment)”. In a survey of human resource professionals from 138 Swiss companies, Bethke-Langenegger et al. (2011) found significant relationships between various TM strategies and organisation performance outcomes. Specifically, regression analysis results showed that TM that focussed on corporate strategy had a significant positive impact on company profit, a positive effect on organisational outcome, and positive impact on performance motivation; TM that focussed on succession planning had significant positive effect on company profit and positive effect on human resource outcomes (performance motivation, work quality and trust in leaders); TM strategy that focussed on talent retention had a positive effect on customer satisfaction and all human resource outcomes indicators (job satisfaction, motivation, commitment, work quality, qualification and trust in leaders); and TM strategy with a focus on developing talents had a positive effect on financial outcomes, organisational outcomes, and human resource outcomes.

Similar findings have been reported elsewhere. Kehinde (2012) observed high correlation between TM and profitability as well as between TM and return on investment in sixteen companies in Lagos, Nigeria. In the US McKinsey & Company reports a positive link between talent and productivity following a survey of 4500 senior managers and officers in 56 US companies (Axelrod et al., 2001). Specifically, the survey found that A-Players (best 20 percent of managers) in

operational roles raised productivity by 40 percent over average performers; those in general management roles raised profitability by 49 percent; and those in sales roles raised sales revenue by 67 percent more than average performers. In another consulting firm's report Ernst & Young found strong correlation between superior TM and enhanced business performance, measured as return on common equity (ROE) where TM programmes are aligned with business strategy (Collings, 2015). The above evidence on the benefits of TM points towards the success of firm specificity of practices. Indeed any successful TM strategy is aligned to an organisation's business strategy (Mazurkiewicz, 2014).

Broadly speaking TM offers organisations competitive advantage in a business world where competition is ever increasing. In reporting a study on how analytics talent is driving competitive advantage at data-oriented companies, Ransbotham et al. (2015) report that analytical innovators, who use talent as a key driver in innovating and gaining competitive advantage with analytics, have a tight grip on the talent market-finding it less difficult to attract and retain talent. This is a clear benefit of TM on human resource outcomes. This view is shared by Hughes and Rog (2008) who argue that effective TM ensures that organisations can successfully acquire and retain essential talent, and keep them engaged. There is sufficient evidence on the effect of employee engagement on organisational success: the likelihood of saying positive things about the organisation leading to a positive employer brand, minimises turnover, and encourages application of superior level effort which in turn improves service quality, customer satisfaction, productivity, sales and profitability (Hughes and Rog, 2008). It is also supported by Collings and Mellahi (2009) who argue that effective TM has an indirect positive relationship with organisational performance mediated by work motivation, organisational commitment and extra role behaviour.

The above evidence suggests desirable effects of TM to organisations, and therefore, a necessary undertaking for organisations that wish to compete favourably in today's global market. However, such an undertaking should be approached with care. It is recognised that studying links between TM and organisational performance is difficult because of confounding variables and potential survey bias (in case of surveys) (Silzer and Dowell, 2010). Although there is very little empirical evidence of the link between TM and organisation performance there is belief in the benefits

of TM (Collings, 2015), largely stimulated by consulting firms and practitioners. What comes out clearly from the confusion on the TM-organisation performance link is the narrow view that organisation performance takes, usually a focus on shareholder value at the expense of other stakeholders like employees (Collings, 2014). When organisation performance is perceived as a multidimensional construct and the effects of TM are analysed using multidimensional frames like the one provided by Bethke-Langenegger et al. (2011) then academics and practitioners alike can begin to bring closure to the question of whether TM leads to organisational success. Instead, the focus will be on what the organisation's strategy is and whether TM is aligned to it for optimal benefits. It is clear from the preceding sections that TM is increasingly seen as a critical factor in developing successful organisations, making it a strategic priority for business. It is an equally critical factor for universities as the value of highly qualified academics to any university is undoubtedly more so as the recruitment of academics is becoming increasingly difficult in a highly competitive academic labour market (Kubler and DeLuca, 2006).

The ability to attract and retain high quality individuals is therefore a key leadership challenge as the academic community moves forward (Davies and Davies, 2010). Just like business and industry, the academy is discovering the need for talent to meet new quality standards demanded by society and the next generation (Agrawal, 2010). This need is further precipitated by trends affecting the higher education sector, particularly a shift from a collegial culture to a managerial one and globalisation vis-à-vis academic mobility. These two trends are examined below, starting with the rise of managerialism followed by globalization, while being mindful of other related discourses like academic capitalism and entrepreneurialism and the degree of overlap that these have with (new) managerialism and globalisation (Deem, 2001). It is acknowledged that these trends influence how universities manage academic talent or academic leadership talent in their quest for legitimacy.

Tapper and Palfreyman (2010) hold that for ages, the collegial tradition has almost universally been an intrinsic component of any higher education institution that wants to call itself a university. Operating through committee structures the collegial tradition is guided by one of its core values of ensuring that power is dispersed and that the ultimate authority is located in the membership at large (Tapper and

Palfreyman, 2010). In the context of collegiality, universities are not traditionally associated with what Deem and Brehony (2005) call the dominance of management. Without a doubt the collegial tradition was suited to universities that were stable environments. In such environments, where universities' missions were discovering and disseminating knowledge, change occurred slowly and at a pace dictated by the universities themselves (Davies et al., 2001). However, political, economic and social pressures transmitted through a combination of government and market demands (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2010) have led others to question the suitability of collegial models of governance in dealing with such pressures and the dynamism that now exists in university environments. Some of the key issues that characterise the higher education landscape are policy developments that require new models of governance, increasing student numbers, challenges on financing (particularly the search for new sources of finance to replace declining government funding on higher education (Deem, 2001) and the development of more accountability mechanisms. As Davies, et al (2001:1025) put it, "universities now have to conduct their activities in a more business-like manner and, as such, need a concerted effort by all to succeed".

The pressures highlighted above and the need for universities to be business-like have precipitated the adoption of (new-) managerialism in universities. As a concept, new managerialism concerns the application of private (for-profit) sector techniques, values and practices to the management of publicly funded organisations (Deem, 2001). According to Deem (2001), the underlying assumptions for new managerialism are efficiency, effectiveness, excellence and continuous improvement. Such managerial ethos sit well with universities that purport to be dynamic businesses that are responsive to the expectations of the business community, students who are now viewed more as customers, and other stakeholders. Universities in Malawi have not been immune to this shift. The expanding public university sector continues to search for effective and efficient ways of conducting business by, among other ways, adopting performance management systems and outsourcing non-core functions. The growing private sector university on the other hand continues to rely on zero-hours' contracts or part-time academics in order to remain profitable and financially viable. Such strategies,

according to Boxall and Purcell (2016) help organisations to deal with the strategic threat of overstaffing while at the same time offering the organisations flexibility.

The above pressures and expectations have led to new forms of academic work (for example the need to work as part of interdisciplinary teams or being entrepreneurial) that require new ways of managing and organizing that work, and therefore the need to transmit new values in academics (Deem, 2001). The modern, talented academic needs to do more than the traditional abilities of scientific understanding and academic expertise. According to Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen (2015), academic talent is often distinguished by the extra, non-scientific skills such as creativity/innovation, socio-affective abilities, communication and cooperation skills although Grugulis (2003), while agreeing that such 'generic' skills are necessary in work, highlights the fact that they are extremely hard to measure or compare. All this amounts to the fact that conceptualisation of academic talent or leadership within academia needs to conform to the prevailing context of higher education. The challenge for many universities, therefore, is to actively engage in the identification and nurturing of the required talent. Whether the shift from collegial traditions to (new-) managerialism is fully adopted and implemented or it is largely rhetoric devised to claim legitimacy as espoused by institutional theory, one thing that is clear is that the shift in governance cultures makes talent management a necessity in academia. The need for academic talent to perform the new forms of academic work, and for leadership talent necessary to survive in a dynamic and highly competitive environment, is real, regardless of such consequences as the significant distortion of the academic mission (Welch, 2016). The other source of pressure on universities' ability to attract and retain academic talent is globalization vis-à-vis academic mobility.

Globalization, conceptualized as the global spread of business and services as well as key economic, social and cultural practices to a world market, is associated with a multifaceted set of changes in countries as well as institutions (Deem, 2001). One of the major aspects of globalization is brain drain or high skill migration (Docquier and Rapoport, 2012) which creates both winners and losers in the process. People move for a variety of reasons ranging from economic, political, personal and professional which can fall into categories of push or pull factors. Winners have always been those that understand and address the relevant mobility factors. The

effects of globalization are also experienced in higher education institutions leading to the market for academic talent to become more competitive compared to other labour markets because of unique characteristics of academic labour.

The market for academic talent has become truly international such that academics have become increasingly mobile and schools [or universities] have to compete for academic talent in a global arena (Verhaegen, 2005). Verhaegen (2005), who studied academic recruitment and retention in European business schools, further contends that the number of providers of management education and research are increasing rapidly while the number of qualified academic staff remains stable, making it even more critical for deans and directors of business schools to have a solid understanding of factors that govern recruitment and retention of academic staff. One of the unique characteristics of academic talent is that it enjoys a well-developed institutional mobility infrastructure because of its strategic role in knowledge production. According to Bauder (2012) aspects taken as a norm in academia, for instance mobility as academic practice and the possibility of multiple institutional affiliations at different locations, do not exist in other professions. This makes academic labour rather peculiar and inimitable.

The ease with which talent moves across international boundaries as a consequence of globalization, generally, and the existing well developed institutional mobility infrastructure for academic talent means that institutions and countries need mobility strategies to remain competitive. Today, it is common to find well-established institutional contexts, philanthropic foundations, national governments and supranational institutions that stimulate and facilitate academic labour mobility (Bauder, 2012). In addition to strength of national economies and national research systems as factors that attract foreign academic [talent] (Lepori et al., 2015), national governments can ease the burden of migration through visa requirements or conditions. Bauder (2012) cites Germany as an example of visa conditions, and China and India as countries that have deliberate policies to encourage the return of academics. Germany, once a strong advocate for the return of foreign researchers to their countries of origin, created an immigration law that seeks to attract highly skilled workers such as academics and researchers as permanent immigrants. Developing countries with economic prospects like China and India pursue academic mobility strategies and have established national return programmes for academics.

These trends and mobility infrastructures, which are almost non-existent in most African academic labour markets, have intensified challenges for academic talent management in Africa.

2.4 Theoretical framework for the study: Institutional Theory and Institutional Logics Perspectives

The academic field of talent management, whose discourse and practice is largely driven by businesses and consulting firms, has been characterised by a lack of theoretical frameworks (Lewis and Heckman, 2006). However, recent developments show that the landscape is changing. It is now possible to point to a growing area of talent management theory. In a more recent comprehensive review of the talent management literature, Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) found a wide range of theoretical frameworks in use by researchers on TM. The dominant frameworks include resource based-view, international human resource management, and institutionalism. Other, less prevalent, theoretical frameworks identified by the authors are knowledge management, career management, social exchange theory, and strength-based approaches. While the diverse range of theoretical frameworks is not in itself a problem in advancing the field, Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015) recommend that, crucially, researchers make deliberate choices of theoretical framing and consistently use the chosen frameworks within a project. This recommendation follows their observation that many papers which they reviewed contained a mishmash of concepts resulting in an inconsistent story within a paper. The authors further postulate that in order to advance our understanding of talent management, studies need to be framed within the above identified dominant theoretical frameworks and/or in further exploring the potential value of studying talent management using the alternative frameworks. In response to this proposal the present study is anchored in institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) and institutional logics (Reay and Hinings, 2009). As stated above, institutional theory is one of the dominant frameworks in talent management studies (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015) and Greenwood et al. (2008) hold that it is perhaps the dominant approach to understanding organisations. Further credence in the choice of institutional theory

as the lens for the present study is rendered by the theory's ability to explain change in different directions. According to Paauwe and Boselie (2007) institutional theory as per DiMaggio and Powell (1983) explains change in the same direction within an organisational field and does not factor in the possibility of uniqueness due to specific interests and human agency. It is Greenwood and Hinings (1996) who extend the theory's power to explain change by examining the processes by which individual organisations retain, adopt and discard templates for organizing in view of the institutionalized nature of organisational fields.

In their influential paper on institutional theory DiMaggio and Powell (1983) sought to find out why there was startling homogeneity of organisational forms and practices despite the fact that in the initial stages of their life cycle organisations display considerable diversity in approach and form. Their answer to the observed homogenization process was isomorphism. [Institutional] isomorphism is the notion that organisations that share the same context tend to look more similar and adopt similar practices than those that do not (Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983) organisations compete not just for resources and customers, but for political power and institutional legitimacy, for social and economic fitness. This means that the behaviour of organisations is not solely a response to market pressures, but also to institutional pressures emanating from regulatory agencies, general social expectations and actions of leading organisations (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996). They, therefore, argue that the concept of institutional isomorphism is a useful tool for understanding the politics and ceremony that pervade much of modern organisational life. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identify three mechanisms (or pressures) of institutional isomorphic change: coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, and normative isomorphism. According to institutional theory, organisations are under social influence and pressure to adopt practices and to adapt to and be consistent with their institutional environment (Tarique and Schuler, 2010).

Coercive isomorphisms result from both formal and informal pressures exerted on organisations by other organisations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organisations function (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983) these pressures may be felt as force, as persuasion, or as invitations to join in collusion. Coercive

mechanisms may include the influence of social partners such as trade unions, employment laws and regulations and government (Najeeb, 2013; Boon et al., 2009). In the case of Malawian universities coercive pressures may be felt in the form of the constant need to satisfy conditions for accreditation of programmes and degrees by government and lately by the National Council for Higher Education, for example.

Mimetic isomorphism results from organisational responses to uncertainty where one organisation serves as a convenient source of practices for another organisation (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983) models may be diffused unintentionally, indirectly through employee transfer or turnover, or explicitly by organisations such as consulting firms or industry trade associations. In the talent management literature, mimetic pressures would refer to pressures emanating from competitive pressures that call for organisations to be more proactive in attracting the best talent available (Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014). Through mimetic processes or modelling, organisations tend to model themselves after similar organisations in their field that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Organisations look at the best talent management practices and attempt to implement them (Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014). In the present case, Malawi's academic labour market has, for a long time, been dominated by the oldest and largest public university. Largely a teaching university (initially established to train personnel ready to replace expatriates when Malawi attained political independence), its graduates are widely spread in all sectors including private universities and other public universities. It is thus a sectoral leader in that regard.

Normative isomorphism, the third source of isomorphic organisational change, results primarily from professionalization which is defined as the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work, to control the production of producers, and to establish a cognitive base and legitimacy for their occupation autonomy (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Two aspects of professionalization, namely formal education and professional networks (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) are particularly important as they increase similarity of the skills and knowledge of the total workforce in a particular sector (Boon et al., 2009). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983) one important mechanism for encouraging normative isomorphism is the filtering of personnel through, for

instance, the hiring of individuals from firms within the same industry, common promotion practices, and skill-level requirements for particular jobs at both entry level and throughout the career progression.

Grounding the present study in institutional theory lens is insightful in a number of ways. Speaking broadly, institutional theory has been widely used to study the adoption and diffusion of organisational forms and human resource management activities (Tarique and Schuler, 2010). Within the talent management literature, institutional theory is applied to understand how organisations adopt and implement talent management practices, or how they sometimes fail to implement them (Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014). The present study finds Tarique and Schuler (2010) use of institutional theory's isomorphic processes to identify and highlight the complex and dynamic relationship between factors that are endogenous and exogenous to the [organisation] of particular relevance, especially as it isolates the pressures at play between those within the control of management and those outside such control. Writing about global talent challenges Tarique and Schuler (2010) and Schuler et al. (2011) highlight factors that shape specific challenges and responses of particular firms such as globalization, demographics, demand-supply gap, and required competencies while noting the extreme importance of context in how these forces and shapers are conceptualized. Nevertheless organisations respond to those pressures in order to survive and gain legitimacy for their corporate behaviours (Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014). Although operating in a different context these forces and shapers are not limited to the global arena of talent management. In any case Malawi's academic labour market is greatly affected by what happens globally because it is particularly vulnerable. Malawi is an interesting case for investigating the extent to which universities use talent management activities and policies as tools to address the challenges. Efforts at improving staffing levels in both quality and quantity through the years have been frustrated by declining real wages and the economy's poor performance in comparison to other economies regionally and globally (Morton, 1975; The American Council on Education, 1964; Holland, 2010). Another interesting feature about Malawi is that while most academic labour markets are worried about the rate at which faculty are ageing, Malawi's concern has been the dominance of young, inexperienced faculty (Kerr and Mapanje, 2002; World Bank, 2010).

In relation to institutional theory, Malawi's academic labour market is a particularly compelling case study because of how the university sector is segmented. Having distinct public, private and religious universities provides an interesting 'institutional field' or context in which to assess the extent to which individual universities reformulate their internal 'interpretative scheme' (Paauwe and Boselie, 2007) in the process of converging with other actors or as they defy established practices. According to Paauwe and Boselie (2007) an organisation's interpretative scheme consists of assumptions about the appropriate domain in which the organisation should operate, beliefs and values about the principles of organizing, and defined performance criteria to assess success. Given such distinct ownership structures the degree of convergence or divergence based on institutionalization need not be taken for granted, given the growing interest in why and how organisations may interpret and respond differently to their contexts (Greenwood et al., 2008). In view of the aforementioned ownership structures, it is important to consider the role of institutional logics, which, according to Hinings (2012) have become an important research theme in institutional theory.

According to Thornton and Ocasio (2008), institutional logics can be defined as the way a particular social world works and that institutional logics shape rational, mindful behaviour. In turn individual and organisational actors play a role in shaping and changing institutional logics. Institutional logics, therefore, provide organizing principles for a field such that institutional change is usually associated with a new logic for the field where the dominant logic guides behaviour (Reay and Hinings, 2009). It has also been shown that conflicting logics may be a source of resistance (Najeeb, 2013), leading organisations to adopt practices at a very superficial level without real commitment to the underlying principles of those practices and with little effort to integrate them with existing systems and structures (Collings and Dick, 2011). Although universities in Malawi operate in the same national higher education context and that they are all not immune to pressures from the global context of academic labour, the different ownership structures provide opportunities to better understand the interaction of isomorphic pressures and institutional logics. According to Martin et al. (2016) institutional logics offer new insights into HR decision-making and have become one of the most important theoretical frameworks in organisational and management theory.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed selected relevant literature on talent management. In a broad sense, origins of the term talent, definitions and practices related to talent management have been outlined. Furthermore, the chapter has established the business case for talent management. In setting the scene for the study's context the chapter has also attempted to position talent management in academia and why it matters by highlighting the shift from collegiality to managerialism and globalization as some of the forces that make talent management a worthwhile undertaking in universities. The chapter has concluded with an exposition of TM theory, choice of theoretical framework for the study, and the role of context in the application or implementation of TM practices. Having reviewed the literature on TM and having decided to use institutional theory and institutional logics as framework for the study, the following chapter contextualizes the thesis. It provides an overview of the university education context in Malawi, noting how the sector has developed from one large public university to other public universities and the rise of religious and private universities. The chapter also explores talent related challenges that the sector faces.

Chapter 3 . Study context-Academic labour market in Malawi

This chapter situates the study. In order to be conversant with Malawi's university education there is need to understand the environment within which university education players operate, including what happens elsewhere in Africa. The chapter first provides an overview of higher education in Africa before providing the Malawi context. This is important because although university education has now received sufficient backing as an important driver for economic growth, challenges abound. Some of the challenges border on quality and quantity, and are a result of the recurrent problem of staffing and capacity building that Africa's higher education institutions (HEIs) face. The chapter also seeks to highlight the changing landscape of Africa's higher education, which is characterised by the rise of non-state funded universities. Some of these, such as those established by religious institutions, operate on a not-for-profit basis while others are established by private individuals and are run based on business principles. These different ownership arrangements point towards different institutional logics that are worth highlighting as they have an effect on academic talent management.

3.1 Higher education landscape in Africa

Higher education in Africa shares a similar history. Its links to colonialism, the influence of external governments and international aid agencies is unmistakable. The establishment of universities in Africa owes as much to the desire by Africans for African higher education as it does to the technical and financial support of governments and organisations outside Africa. This is evident in the financial resources sourced externally towards establishment and running of the founding African universities and the dominance of expatriate staff in the early years of the universities (Morton, 1975; Ade Ajayi et al., 1996). In tying African higher education to colonialism, Luhanga et al. (2003) distinguish three principal categories of African universities, which include Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone, suggesting that African universities were largely modelled upon HEIs in countries that colonised them. For instance Luhanga et al. (2003) state that Anglophone

universities were under the guidance of the University of London while the majority of Francophone universities were under the guidance of the Universities of Paris and Bordeaux. According to Ade Ajayi et al. (1996), expatriates remained firmly in control of the universities in Africa throughout the 1960s, thereby controlling the pace of change, and reforms aimed at Africanising the curricula and decolonising the structures of control and management did not appear until the 1970s. These external institutions and expatriate staff therefore played a big role in shaping the African universities' institutional logics.

Today, higher education in Africa faces difficult realities of inadequate financial resources, unprecedented demand for access, legacy of colonialism, economic and social crises, and HIV/AIDS (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). The sector experienced years of neglect because it was regarded as unimportant by governments and international agencies. For decades, donor institutions focussed on primary and secondary education, neglecting tertiary education, in their development assistance to most African countries as a way to improve economic growth and mitigate poverty (Bloom et al., 2006). For instance, World Bank's worldwide higher education sector spending dropped from 17 percent (1985-1989) to 7 percent from 1995 to 1999 (Bloom et al., 2006). Bloom et al. (2006) contend that the belief that primary and secondary schooling were more important than tertiary education for poverty reduction encouraged African governments' relative neglect of higher education, inevitably leading to the challenges associated with the sector.

Teferra and Altbach (2004) identify twelve key elements of higher education in Africa, which include access; funding/financing; governance; excessive non-academic staff; university management; private higher education; gender; research and publishing; academic freedom; brain drain/capacity building; language of instruction; and student activism. Below, I briefly discuss access, financing, brain drain and capacity, governance and management since they directly relate to academic TM.

Access This is one of the key elements of higher education in Africa where demand is growing and resources are strained. More students are admitted into institutions designed to carry fewer numbers (Teferra and Altbach, 2004; Okebukola, 2015).

According to the World Bank (2010), Sub Saharan Africa is the region that faces the greatest challenges in the provision of higher education despite substantial increases in the past four decades. Such increases have failed to take the region's enrolment to the level of other regions. For example the 2003 gross enrolment ratio (GER) for tertiary education of 5 percent was in the same range as that of other developing regions 40 years ago, with many countries struggling to even maintain such low levels (Bloom et al., 2006). As at 2012 the region's GER had only risen to 8 percent compared to ratios of above 28 percent for most developing regions (UNESCO, 2014; UNDP, 2014).

Funding and financing challenges are a result of pressure of expansion and massification, economic problems, changes in fiscal climate induced by multilateral lenders, inability of students to afford tuition rates or inability to impose tuition fees due to political pressure, and misallocation and poor prioritization of available financial resources (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). Furthermore, financing difficulties have also resulted in poor state of research, low and declining salaries for academic and research staff, leading to massive brain drain. The ultimate consequence of inadequate financing is poor education quality.

Brain drain and capacity Brain drain and the question of capacity affect countries and sectors differently. The departure of best scholars and scientists away from universities is one of the most serious challenges facing most African countries (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). Most African countries seem to be the worst affected as an estimated 50, 000 African trained PhDs are working outside the continent (Bloom et al., 2006). Consequently, most African universities have shortage of faculty members with PhD qualifications, such that in most cases there are fewer than 50 percent of faculty who have PhDs (Hayward, 2010). Although this does not speak for the innate talent of faculty members, Hayward (2010) contends that lack of PhD level faculty is a serious impediment to the growth of graduate programmes and research profiles of the affected institutions. It is clear that although staff mobility in the present global set up is expected, most of Africa has been hit hard by its negative consequences.

Governance and management Teferra and Altbach (2004) note that public higher education institutions predominate in Africa and government involvement in university affairs is the norm. In such public universities the head of state is chancellor while vice chancellors, who in many countries are appointed for political rather than academic reasons (Hayward, 2010), assume executive powers (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). Teferra and Altbach (2004) and Sharra (2013) further observe that although efficient management and administrative systems are important to the productivity and effectiveness of any enterprise, African universities suffer from poor, inefficient and highly bureaucratic management systems. They further contend that the manner in which universities are governed and how leadership is appointed often contributes to the magnitude and scope of the problems.

The attitude towards higher education has changed upon realisation that it can produce both public and private benefits like better health, improved quality of life and technological catch up on more technologically advanced societies (Bloom et al., 2006). As a result, higher education has found its way into countries' Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), developing countries' blue prints for development and economic growth. The change was signalled by the World Bank's 1999 World Development Report on knowledge for development whose proposal was against the monopoly enjoyed by basic education on a nation's attention and resources as countries become players in global markets. Most of the developing Countries needed to adapt to and apply new information-based technology (Kadzamira and Rose, 2001). They, therefore, started mentioning tertiary education in their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). For instance, out of the 31 PRSPs for African countries which Bloom et al. (2006) analysed 20 mention tertiary schooling, although in most cases it is a small element of the development strategy. Of these countries Cameroon, Malawi and Zambia consider tertiary schooling as a way to reduce poverty.

The higher education terrain in Malawi is not any different from that of most African countries. Malawi has faced similar challenges and is characterised by the same hunger and drive to correct the ills inflicted upon it by the years of neglect. The sections below elucidate the Malawi higher education case. Starting with a brief background of Malawi the chapter proceeds with a discussion on the national talent

landscape, the education policy environment, the higher education sector, and the chapter's concluding remarks.

3.2 Malawi's academic labour market

Malawi attained independence from Britain in 1964 and became a republic two years later. For 30 years the country was under one party rule until 1994 when the first multiparty government was formed. A land locked Southern Africa country, it shares borders with Zambia to the west and northwest, Tanzania to the north and northeast, and Mozambique to the southwest, south and east. The country's population has grown from slightly over 4 million in 1966 to 13.1 million in 2008, projected to reach 17 million in 2017 (National Statistical Office (NSO), 2008). Agriculture, accounting for 30 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), is the predominant economic activity.

3.2.1 The national talent or skills landscape

Training institutions play a critical role in developing skill sets and skill levels that industry or countries require for economic growth. However, training institutions have had a fair share of blame in Malawi's slow economic growth because they have failed to sufficiently meet industry's skills needs. This is a result of many challenges that training institutions at all levels face, ranging from inadequate and poor infrastructure to staffing. Not surprisingly, increasing the stock of human capital is seen as a major challenge in Malawi's efforts to achieve economic growth (Durevall and Mussa, 2010). Durevall and Mussa (2010) argue that Malawi needs to increase labour productivity, which partly depends on the skill levels of the workers, by heavily investing in the education system to improve access, particularly at secondary and tertiary level, and quality at all levels. There are reported increasing returns to education with education level in Malawi, five percent and sixty-five percent for those with primary and university education, respectively, with female workers having higher rates of return on education than their male counterparts at higher levels of education (Durevall and Mussa, 2010). According to the authors, such high levels of returns at higher levels of education reflect severe shortages of skilled and highly educated workers. Various players in the Malawi labour market

recognise skilled workforce as an important factor. A number of surveys and reports attest to this position.

The Global Competitiveness Report 2016-2017 (World Economic Forum, 2016), a competitive index of 138 countries ranks Malawi at 134 when all pillars of the index are considered and 131 on the higher education and training pillar. The poor ranking on higher education and training might explain why inadequate educated workforce was among the most problematic factors for doing business in the country. Some of the Malawi highlights on this pillar are the best ranking of female participation and three worst indicators of firing costs, pay and labour productivity, and brain drain. The World Bank (2010) report that Malawian firms rank skilled labour shortages as a serious problem such that one third of firms rank inadequately educated labour force as one of the top five problematic factors. In manufacturing alone, 66 percent of the workers are unskilled. This is higher than the Sub Saharan Africa average of 35-45 percent (World Bank, 2010). Locally, firms in manufacturing and services reported skilled labour shortages as a major problem, an observation echoed by 40 percent exporters and large firms and 20 percent non exporters and small firms (Durevall and Mussa, 2010). Another telling indicator of skills shortage in the country is the endemic staff shortage in other sectors, for instance the health sector.

With a physician-to-population ration of 1:50,000, it is worse than the overall ration for Sub-Saharan Africa, which comprises 48 countries that lie south of the Sahara Desert, at 1:8000 (Mills et al., 2008). One of the reasons for such poor staffing levels is migration. Between 1993 and 2002 as many as 166 out of 209 (79%) registered nurse-midwife graduates emigrated, indicating that the more qualified maternal health staff are the more likely they are to seek employment internationally (Gerein et al., 2006). The Ministry of Health (MoH) in Malawi provides about 60 percent of all health services and the remainder is offered by Christian Health Association of Malawi (37%) and private and not-for-profit organisations (3%) (Manafa et al., 2009). The health worker population is low compared to demand. In 2003 only 4000 doctors, nurses and midwives were available to serve a population of 12 million (Manafa et al., 2009). The number rose to about 8300 in 2009 (Management Sciences for Health (MSH), 2010). In spite of such an increase there was still disproportionate rural-urban distribution of certain health worker cadres, 95

percent and 5 percent for urban and rural facilities, respectively. The acute shortage of health workers at district and community levels in Malawi is attributed to fewer incentives and support available to attract and retain staff (Manafa et al., 2009) and voluntary turnover as health workers migrate to developed European countries (Ross et al., 2005).

The sentiments on skill sets and levels are also shared by university graduates. In a tracer study of four cohorts that graduated in 1980, 1987, 1994 and 1999 Kadzamira (2003) observed a dominant perception among the graduates that their university education did not adequately prepare them for the world of work. The graduates lamented that curriculum was either outdated and irrelevant to the needs of country and industry or too theoretical. For instance, of those sampled, 43 percent were concerned with quality, 42 percent with curriculum issues and 36 percent with commitment of lecturers. According to Kadzamira (2003) concern about competence and commitment of lecturers was slightly higher among cohorts of the 1990s than those of the 1980s, signalling the university's inability to retain well-qualified staff due to the general decline in real incomes and failure to offer competitive salaries.

3.2.2 The education policy environment

A number of national policy documents or frameworks that seek to promote the education sector have been developed over the years. Such policies have sought to give guidance to all players on government priorities in the sector. The priorities, because of donor dependence on funding, have tended to reflect donor priorities and interests, sometimes to the detriment of the needs of the country (Kadzamira and Rose, 2001). For example, the 1983 World Bank advice to increase primary school user charges led to a decline in enrolment (Thobani, 1983). As time has progressed, so has the policy landscape of the education sector. Priorities have shifted between primary, secondary and higher education.

The first post-independence education development plan: 1973-1980 prioritised secondary and tertiary education at the expense of primary education in order to provide middle level manpower to fill posts left by the colonial government (Kadzamira and Rose, 2001). This focus changed in the second education development plan (1985-1995) to primary education in order to increase access, equity and relevance of primary education (Swainson et al., 1998). Such focus was

retained in the Education Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) of 1995 which was developed to accommodate free primary education and other reforms. This framework, mainly covering primary, secondary and teacher education, did not cover the whole education sector and completely ignored tertiary education (Kadzamira and Rose, 2001).

Priorities changed again in the last decade, probably as a result of change in attitude at the international level following recognition of the importance of tertiary schooling as part of the multi-pronged development strategy for economic development (Bloom et al., 2006). Such a shift was signalled by the World Bank's (1999) World Development Report on knowledge for development which proposed that basic education should not monopolise a nation's attention as it becomes a player in global markets. If anything, higher levels of education deserve increased attention because of the need to adapt to and apply new information-based technology (Kadzamira and Rose, 2001). In a show of commitment towards higher education, Malawi considered tertiary education as way to reduce poverty in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) (Bloom et al., 2006). The Malawi PRSP promised to transform higher education system to respond to new realities and opportunities within the context of poverty reduction (Malawi Government, 2002). According to the Malawi Government focus of the Poverty Reduction Strategy was to improve efficiency and quality as well as increased motivation for teaching and research staff.

The PRSP, when government noted that it could not adequately stimulate economic growth, was replaced by the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS): 2006-2011 (Malawi Government, 2011). The MGDS was considered the overarching operational medium term strategy for Malawi to attain the country's Vision 2020. The education sub theme was contained in the social development theme whose overall goal was to develop human capital for full participation in the socio-economic and political development of the country (Malawi Government, 2006). The goal of the education sub theme, with regards to tertiary education, was to provide high quality professional training in all fields where the following were the medium term expected outcomes:

- Increase undergraduate enrolment by 40 percent

- Increase postgraduate enrolment ration to 10 percent of the undergraduate student population
- 35 percent female enrolment by 2010
- Improve curriculum to respond to national needs.

In terms of budgetary allocations education had the fourth highest (out of 8 focus areas) allocation of 5.6 percent over the strategy's five year span. However, the strategy document did not indicate financial breakdown within the education sub sectors. It would not be surprising, given the varying degrees of emphasis, if higher education got the lowest share. At the expiry of implementation period for the MGDS, the second medium term national development strategy (MGDS II) was formulated.

The MGDS II: 2011-2016 builds on the gains, lessons and best practices achieved during implementation of MGDS. Still falling within the social development theme, the education sub theme is directly linked to two Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), namely (1) achievement of universal primary education and (2) promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. It obviously has a heavier emphasis on primary education than the other education sub sectors. On tertiary education, the strategy seeks to increase access to higher education, technical and vocational training, teacher and university education, and expansion and rehabilitation of universities/colleges. It also seeks to improve quality and relevance of education at tertiary level by training and recruiting personnel, improving terms and conditions of service for lecturers, and provision of supportive infrastructure.

In order to achieve the education sector's targets, the MGDS II adopted the funding proportion as arrived at the UNESCO Education for All Dakar Declaration Framework, 2000 which required governments to commit 20 percent of national budget to education. For Malawi, the bulk of this education allocation (62%) is for basic education while 17 percent and 21 percent respectively is allocated to secondary, and tertiary and vocational sub sectors.

The current education sector specific plan is the National Education Sector Plan (NESP): 2008-2017. It supports the Government of Malawi's commitment to the realisation of the MGDS and international protocols arising from Education for All (EFA) and MDGs. The NESP, comprehensive in scope and covering all levels of

education and their subsectors for 10 years, draws on the first and second education development plans, PIF, Vision 2020 and MGDS.

In the higher education sub sector the NESP identifies challenges (eg: Weaknesses and deficiencies in university management system, including the absence of clear regulations governing such processes as the creation of posts, appointment of staff, the tenure system; lack of mechanism to monitor productivity, which is adversely impacted upon by staff absenteeism and private work; teaching staff remains largely junior in terms of academic rank, with only twenty (20) percent of staff in UNIMA and one (1) percent at Mzuzu holding PhD or equivalent qualifications (Malawi Government, 2008)) and strategies with which to tackle the challenges. The strategies fall within governance and management, access and equity, and quality and relevance.

3.2.3 Higher education provision in Malawi

Higher education in Malawi began with the opening of the first public university, the University of Malawi (UNIMA), in 1964. Today the University of Malawi has four constituent colleges on campuses located in Zomba, Blantyre, and Lilongwe, following the delinking of one college to become a third public university. For a long time UNIMA was the only provider of higher education until 1999 when Mzuzu University (MZUNI), a second public university was established in the northern city of Mzuzu. The past decade has seen establishment of a number of private universities to compliment government's effort in the provision of higher education. While this is a positive development in meeting the demand for higher education in the country a number of challenges need attending to in order to ameliorate the negative consequences of the proliferation of higher education institutions in a weakly regulated context. Concerns that private universities are exploitative are commonplace (Kampanje, 2014) although their fees still fall below the commercial values (World Bank, 2010).

It is noteworthy that although the past decade has experienced a rapid increase in the number of universities, the University of Malawi is by far the largest in terms of programmes on offer, enrolment and staff establishment. Out of the 22 universities registered by the country's National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) four are

public, nine are religious by virtue of their affiliation to a religious body and the remaining nine are private.

The various policy instruments highlighted in the previous section have noted the limiting size of the university education sector. Realising the existing capacity challenges, calls have been made for increased access through expansion of universities, training and recruitment of additional staff (Malawi Government, 2011), retention of academic staff and raising academia profile through continuous professional development (Malawi Government, 2008) in order to meet the country's development needs. These calls have been made in view of the status of the sector, which has largely stagnated and if progress has been made, it has been at a very slow pace compared to other university education sectors in the region and beyond. Below are some of the issues that specifically characterise Malawi's higher education.

3.2.3.1 Brain drain and capacity

In Malawi, universities continue to experience massive brain drain to sectors within and wealthier economies in the region and beyond. Although not peculiar to Malawian universities it is cause for concern since it negatively affects growth of the universities. Teferra and Altbach (2004) assert that brain drain is one of the most serious challenges facing many African countries, where the departure of best scholars and scientists away from universities takes two forms: internal mobility and regional/overseas migration.

Internal mobility is the flow of high level expertise from the universities to better-paying government agencies and private institutions and firms that may or may not be able to utilize their expertise and talent effectively (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). According to Teferra and Altbach (2004) regional/overseas migration has seen experienced and skilled faculties lost to regional and overseas universities.

According to Dzimbiri (2008), brain drain is experienced in three dimensions: those who go for overseas training and never return due to attractions in those countries, those who initially go on leave of absence but never come back, and those who leave academia for public organisations within Malawi. As a result universities have had to rely on junior academics. For example at certain points during the past decade the proportion of junior academic members of staff was as high as 50 percent (University of Malawi Staff Records). This continues to be a problem across the

sector. The challenge of capacity is supported by Msiska and Chulu (2006) who found that ‘staffing and staff qualifications’ was perceived as the second highest limiting factor (56 percent of respondents in a survey) to expansion of student numbers. In terms of global competitiveness (World Economic Forum, 2016) Malawi is the lowest ranked country out of 138 countries on tertiary GER, it is number 88 on country capacity to retain talent and 95 capacity to attract talent.

3.2.3.2 Financing

In Malawi some of the financing challenges facing higher education institutions (HEIs) include lack of clear government policy on funding, absence of policy and structures to support generation of own funds, and provision of funds mostly for consumption and not development (Fabiano, 2013). While this relates to public universities, religious and private universities which rely on student fees to finance their operations face even greater challenges. Although these religious and private universities shun resource intensive programmes in the sciences, the tuition they charge is still below commercial rates (World Bank, 2010).

Financing problems in the public universities can be linked to failure by government to prioritise university education. In the 1990s primary education was prioritised by governments and international agencies due to its perceived role in poverty reduction (Kadzamira and Rose, 2001). In order to address government resource constraints at secondary and tertiary levels the PIF proposed a number of cost-sharing mechanisms, some of which included shifting full costs of boarding to parents at secondary and university, phasing out boarding at secondary level, fee paying students at university (Kadzamira and Rose, 2001). The 2002 Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper echoed some of these ideas by maintaining funding to the sub sector at the same level for three years despite proposing expansion of university places (Bloom et al., 2006).

Financing at university level is partly constrained by the challenges highlighted by Fabiano above as well as capacity in terms of staff capable of carrying out research and consultancy services. These are avenues that can be used (and have been used elsewhere) to generate more funding where staff successfully compete for research grants and consultancy services. It is in this vein that Fabiano (2013) and others who have written on staffing in the country’s universities have been quick to recommend

training of academic staff to PhD level. While this seems plausible it is important to note, as earlier stated, the existing challenges of brain drain and capacity. There is need, therefore, for universities to develop academic talent while ensuring their retention.

3.2.3.3 Governance

Public higher education institutions predominate the African higher education landscape and government involvement in university affairs is the norm where the head of state is the chancellor (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). Although the chancellor's role is symbolic, since the vice chancellor has executive powers, he/she remains influential by virtue of being appointing authority of boards/councils. Such influence is experienced in a number of ways, some of which detrimental to the growth of public universities.

In 2012 two of the constituent colleges of the University of Malawi remained closed for eight (8) months over academic freedom when the inspector general of police at that time summoned a member of academic staff at Chancellor College for questioning over content of a lecture. On the financing side, there have been times when government has overturned proposals by the universities to raise student fees, yet government subvention is not sufficient for the smooth running of public universities. Such refusals have been attributed to reasons bordering more on politics. Fabiano (2013) aptly notes a lack of political will to implement the National Education Sector Plan on matters relating to expansion, tuition fees, quality and relevance.

Governance in religious and private universities takes a different form. While facing less obvious political influence, most of them are characterised by the dominance of top level management with weaker internal structures. Compared to their public university counterparts top leadership in religious and private universities hold greater power to veto decisions. This has implications on TM since it is these leaders that shape their universities' institutional logics.

3.2.3.4 Enrolment

University education in Malawi is extremely competitive due to very limited places for qualifying students. For example, access to higher education remains low at

fewer than 4000 places available as at 2002 (Malawi Government, 2002), which increased to about 8000 in 2007 (Durevall and Mussa, 2010). These numbers need to be read alongside those for qualifying students. In 2007, Mzuzu University had 6000 applications for 800 places and Malawi Adventist University had 300 applicants against 40 places (Durevall and Mussa, 2010). Such scenarios are common in the higher education sector. It is against this background that the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy made commitments to address some challenges related to access: reserving 30 percent of university places for girls, introducing scholarship for girls and needy students, and expanding university places from 3226 to 6824 (Malawi Government, 2002). The situation has improved during the last decade during which another public university and private universities were established. The growth is not much owing to the challenges experienced in the sub sector.

3.2.3.5 The rise of religious and private universities

Private higher education is a growing phenomenon in Africa (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). Havergal (2015) notes that in sub-Saharan Africa while the number of public universities doubled from 100 to 200 between 1990 and 2007, private universities and colleges increased from 24 to over 450 over the same period. Malawi seems to have followed suit in this trend, where the number of private and religious universities far outnumber public universities. These religious and private universities are established on the basis of complementing government efforts in education provision and, since 2012 have to be accredited by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). The process of registering and accrediting private higher education providers was formerly managed by the government's Department of Human Resource Management and Development. Presently the regulatory system as enforced by NCHE between public and private universities is less coherent. There are debates on the role and relevance of NCHE on regulating (and accrediting) public universities which, just like it, are established by Acts of Parliament. Apart from harmonising selection of students into public universities, NCHE's accreditation function has faced resistance among some public university actors. Such lack of coherence in regulation may be indicative of the differences of the kind of pressures that public and private universities have to contend with.

Although the number of private universities is greater than that of public universities they still enrol fewer students compared to public universities. This notwithstanding, they still offer viable options for many school leavers who, although qualifying for university education, cannot compete for the fewer places available in public universities which remain the preferred choice. Just like public universities, they also face staffing challenges partly because their remuneration is not comparable to that of the public universities. Migration of staff from these universities take the form of movement to public universities and the private sector. This has left them to rely on junior academics, and part time lecturers who often hold permanent positions at public universities at the same time (Havergal, 2015). It is also common to find academics who retired in public universities taking up teaching positions in the private universities.

3.3 Conclusion: The recurrent challenges of attraction, development and retention of talent

The context within which Malawian universities operate is one of varying degrees of emphasis for the various sub sectors of the education sector. It is an environment, although cognisant of the need to retain highly qualified academics, it remains to be seen whether academic talent would flourish. The country's higher education sector faces the triple challenges of attraction, development and retention. These are recurring challenges that were noted in the early years of university education in Malawi. For example, Kambalantore (1973) emphasized the need for the University of Malawi to take a more serious view of its staff development programme after realising that the country faced a serious manpower migration to the better surrounding economies. Those who would be interested to teach in the university found government, industry and commerce more attractive. This is echoed by Kerr and Mapanje (2002) who observe that the University of Malawi started experiencing brain drain shortly after the university was established in the 60s. Due to diminishing intellectual capital as a result of political and economic pressures, the university heavily relied on contracted expatriate academics and inexperienced indigenous staff.

Matters relating to policy, brain drain and capacity, financing, governance, and enrolment all seem to suggest that the 2007 study by Heidrick and Struggle (Boshard and Louw, 2012) was right in predicting that talent is most likely to be found in developed wealthy economies. However, there is evidence from organisations and academic institutions elsewhere that talent management holds the key to the improvement of organisational outcomes. It is in view of this understanding and conviction that the present study looks up to talent management for solutions to these challenges.

3.3.1 Malawi's HE sector: A unique context in understanding academic TM

In view of the foregoing, a number of characteristics in Malawi's academic labour market are uniquely manifested to provide an interesting case for analysing academic talent management. As discussed in the preceding chapter, TM is contextual and that organisations that share the same context tend to look more similar and adopt similar practices than those that do not. The Malawi HE sector, which for a long time was a preserve of public universities, changed in outlook with the rise of religious and private universities. In addition to raising unprecedented demand for academics and university administrators (Shawa and Mgonezulu, 2016), this rise led to debates around quality due to the way most of the non-state providers approached HE provision, particularly with regards to academic staffing and facilities. Among the areas of contestation is the pursuit of business/commercial interests by many of the "teaching shops" (Havergal, 2015:35). Exceptions to the pursuit of profit exist in many religious universities which tend to run on a not-for-profit basis. According to Havergal (2015), character building and promoting religious values are more important to these religious universities than making money. What this points to is the existence of different sources of pressure, logics and value systems among the different HE providers. The influence of these on individual universities' approach to TM could provide fresh insights on institutional theory, especially the role of isomorphic pressures in the adoption, or failure thereof, of TM practices. In view of the above, and as the thesis moves to outline the methodological approach to the investigation in chapter 4, the research questions are restated below:

- How do universities conceptualise, identify, develop and retain academic talent?
- In turn, why do the universities adopt particular TM practices and to what extent are they similar in approach?
- To what extent, and how, does a university's 'institutional logics' shape the adoption of various talent management practices?

Chapter 4 . Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The preceding two chapters have set out the context of the study in terms of both the Malawi academic labour market and talent management globally. The academic labour market in Malawi has been described in order to highlight the peculiarities of Malawi's higher education landscape. This chapter outlines and discusses the study's methodological approach that was used in order to achieve the study's objectives and answer the research questions as restated at the end of the preceding chapter.

4.2 Research design

The study adopts a qualitative case study design (Yin, 2003). Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding how individuals or groups ascribe meanings to social or human problems (Creswell, 2009), emphasizing words as opposed to quantification in data collection and analysis (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Its methods are now widespread within organisational research (Symon and Cassell, 2012). The advantage of qualitative research is that it uses methodologies that generate richness, depth, nuance, context, multidimensionality and complexity, giving it unrivalled capacity for compelling arguments about how things work in particular contexts as well as producing well-founded cross-contextual generalities rather than de-contextual versions (Mason, 2002). In defining qualitative research, Mason (2002: p3) identified three features that make up a working definition of qualitative research as follows:

- Grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly interpretivist: concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted, while acknowledging how various versions of qualitative research might approach the above elements in different ways.
- Based on data generation methods which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced.
- Based on methods of analysis, explanation and argument building which involve understanding of complexity, detail and context.

Mason (2002) sums up well the strength of qualitative research when she notes that it is characterized by a range of traditions which do not dovetail neatly into one uniform philosophy or set of methodological principles. Because it cannot be neatly pigeon-holed, qualitative research cannot be reduced to a simple and prescriptive set of principles. Mason further argues that it is important to appreciate the strategic significance of context in the development of our understandings and explanations of the social world.

4.2.1 Determining qualitative study design and epistemological positioning

It is important to note that qualitative research provides for a systematic and rigorous process that can be accountable for its quality and claims (Mason, 2002); and that qualitative researchers can engage in such skills as reflexivity in order to render the qualitative research process credible (Symon and Cassell, 2012). According to Haynes (2012), reflexivity is an awareness of the researcher's role in the practice of research and the way this is influenced by the object of the research. Reflexivity enables the researcher to acknowledge the way in which he or she affects both the research processes and outcomes. Reflexivity was particularly important in this study because I was researching my own organization, which raises potential ethical dilemmas. A reflexive summary is provided in the conclusion chapter to the thesis (See 9.4.2) where I reflect on my experiences as a researcher researching my own organisation and other organisations that I was very familiar with. As Miles et al. (2014) assert, qualitative data are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them. Without a doubt, use of qualitative research design is justified given, among other reasons, the potential of qualitative data to reveal complexity, provide thick descriptions that are vivid, nested in a real context, and have a ring of truth that has a strong impact on the reader (Miles et al., 2014).

In order for any study to qualify for use of qualitative research methods certain parameters must be met. Lee (1999) provides three typical approaches to determining the use of qualitative research and therefore this study closely followed those approaches. Lee (1999) asserts that qualitative research seems best suited to answering questions of description, interpretation, and explanation, and most often

from the perspective of the organisational members under study. The present study required understanding of lived meanings because perspectives of participants were central to the understanding of talent management processes in their university, more so that views were sought from both decision makers or implementers and those directly affected by the decision. The study also needed local grounding or context because interpretation, implementation and effects of talent management are strongly influenced by contextual factors (Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014). The need to fulfil exploratory and explanatory purposes, its contextual nature that required rich, vivid and deep explanations, its investigation of issues with a direct impact on lived experiences of university administrators and academics, lend the study of talent management practices using a qualitative design relevant and credible. The qualitative design is ideal in the present study as it seeks to understand phenomenon which, previously, was not well understood. The importance of thoroughly understanding how differently owned universities apply or fail to apply TM practices cannot be overemphasized – both for practical and theoretical purposes.

In terms of epistemological positioning, this study uses qualitative methods within an interpretivist framework. Epistemology is concerned with what should be regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline. It is the study of the criteria by which we can know what constitutes warranted or scientific knowledge (Duberley et al., 2012). As a research strategy, qualitative research is inductivist, constructionist, and interpretivist although qualitative researchers do not subscribe to all the three (Bryman and Bell, 2003). The present study, with its emphasis on understanding the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants, adopts the interpretivist epistemological position. This is in appreciation of the fact that based on their capacity for self-consciousness and reflection, human beings and human groups are able to reflect on themselves and their relationships (Benton and Craib, 2011). It is an admission of the subjective dimensions of human action (Duberley et al., 2012). The interpretivist tradition therefore calls for the grasp of subjective meaning of social action (Bryman and Bell, 2003) and takes human interpretation as the starting point for developing knowledge about the social world (Duberley et al., 2012). The interpretivist tradition is therefore appropriate for this study as it seeks to understand how various university actors understand and implement TM practices in their unique contexts. It is concerned with how

organisational members derive meaning in order to make sense of talent management within their organisation, bearing in mind both their internal and external environments as well as based on their dominant institutional logics. Insights will be gained by focussing on participants' lived experiences and their perceptions on how universities, for which they work or worked, deal with identification, development and retention of talent.

4.3 Purposive case selection

Choice of participants in qualitative research is constrained by what is practicable (Saunders, 2012). One of the important considerations is access, both to organisations and intended participants. Such practical issues require careful considerations on sampling decisions because researchers can be refused access to organisations on account of lack of perceived value of the research to the organisation, time required of participants who are first and foremost employees, intrusive nature or sensitivity of the research and associated confidentiality issues, scepticism regarding the role of outsiders, or concerns about competence of the researcher (Saunders, 2012). The study's population comprised universities in Malawi and employees, mostly academics and mid to top level managers, who had a stake in decision making processes. Aware of such challenges, negotiations on access with the universities started during the designing phase. The process involved emailing and telephoning either gate keepers or administrators asking for some basic background information, explaining what the study was about and expressing interest in using their institutions as cases. This approach helped in dealing with issues that gate keepers might have had at the earliest stage possible as well as in spotting institutions which might present access challenges. Such trouble shooting was on the basis of the ease with which initial contacts cooperated during this phase. This process was eventually used to determine the cases from which the case studies were selected.

Miles and Huberman (1994) define a case as a unit of analysis and that studies may be of just one case or several. They assert that the strength of several cases lies in their ability to allow the researcher deeper understanding of processes and outcomes of cases, the chances to test (not just develop) hypotheses and a good picture of locally grounded causality. Based on this assertion three case study universities were

therefore selected. Their selection was purposive because they offered contrasting situations (Yin, 2003) since they represented the three distinct providers of university education in Malawi. Other contrasting features about the case universities were age, sources of funding and staffing structures. The study therefore sought to select cases that would maximise what could be learned, achieve balance and variety (Stake, 1995).

4.4 Data collection strategy

The study used an explanatory case study strategy. According to Yin (2009), three situations create relevant opportunities for applying the case study strategy. The situations include the kind of research question, which should be descriptive or explanatory; emphasis on the need to study phenomenon within its real-world context; and when conducting evaluations. While the last condition did not apply to the study's objective, the first two situations were applicable: the study aimed to unravel talent management practices in Malawian universities as experienced by those at the core of making decisions about the TM phenomenon and what to anticipate with regards to TM. Multiple cases were used in order to generate evidence that would help in capturing similarities and unique differences in order to address the research objective with regards to the role of institutional logics across differently structured universities. As indicated elsewhere, the university education system in Malawi can best be characterised as falling within three domains: public, private and religious. This was an important factor to consider because of the potential influences of such ownership arrangements on the issues being investigated in this study, such as the differences in institutional actors and their influence on institutional logics, and how the same interacts with isomorphic pressures to determine adoption of (or failure to institutionalise) TM practices.

The impetus for using the case study strategy was further enhanced by its flexibility in using a number of methods as well as for allowing a researcher to be sensitive to both opportunistic and planned data collection (Hartley, 2004). In order to gain further confirmation, to increase credence in the interpretation, and to demonstrate commonality of assertions, the study relied on methodological triangulation (Stake, 1995). Methodological triangulation applies multiple data collection methods within

a single study, which allowed for the establishment of converging lines of evidence, necessary to improve robustness and validity of findings (Yin, 2009).

4.4.1 Participants

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the study. When this type of sampling is used, choice is based on the researcher's judgement regarding the population's characteristics that are important in relation to the data required to address the research aim (Saunders, 2012). Consequently, as Miles and Huberman (1994) note, qualitative samples tend to be purposive rather than random and are usually not wholly pre-specified but can evolve once fieldwork begins. In order to collect appropriate data, purposive sampling was therefore used.

During the course of fieldwork, snowball sampling was used in instances where initial respondents offered names of organisational members who were deemed to be relevant to the study. Through this process some respondents who were not in the initial purposive sample were included for interviewing and others who were in the initial, pre-specified sample got replaced. For instance in the third case an incumbent staff welfare committee leader was dropped because she was new to the role and she was replaced with her predecessor. This was done to allow inclusion of appropriate role holders, or indeed, good informants. Flick (2009) defines a good informant as one with the necessary knowledge and experience of the issue, capability to reflect and articulate, time to be asked and ready to participate. Having made decisions on appropriate informants, another important decision regarding participants is the question of numbers required to constitute a satisfactory sample in qualitative studies.

There has been a lot of debate regarding how many interviews should be conducted in a qualitative study. This debate has largely been fuelled by positivist orientations of quantitative studies which seek to recruit representative samples. Attempts have been made at prescribing sample sizes for qualitative studies. Saunders (2012) sums up guidance provided by a number of authors. Accordingly, based on the nature of the study, minimum non-probability sample size could range from 4 (4-12) if the population is homogeneous to 36 (35-36) in ethnographic studies (see Saunders, 2012 for a comprehensive summary). The wide range of recommendations on sample size for qualitative research is evidence of the lack of consensus. However,

considering such advice in conjunction with such markers as data quality and data saturation provides a very good starting point. Data saturation, the point at which no new information and themes are observed in the data (Saunders, 2012), has historically provided the needed guideline as to when to stop interviewing or observing. Ordinarily, samples for qualitative investigations tend to be small and an appropriate sample size is one that adequately answers the research question.

In view of the foregoing, especially following the principle of saturation, the present study interviewed a total of 38 respondents in the three case universities. Table 2 below depicts the case study universities, their academic staffing levels, number of interviews and the composition of interviewees. A complete listing of participants and the duration of service with their respective universities is provided in appendices A1 to A3.

Table 2 Case study universities, age, academic staffing levels, interviews and participants

Case	Type	Age (years)	Academic staff	Number of interviews	Participants
A	Public	>50	>700	17	Pro-Vice Chancellor, Ex-Vice Chancellor, Faculty Deans, Union Leader, Departmental Heads, Professors, Senior Lecturers, Ex-Senior Lecturer, Registrar, Ex-Director (Higher Education), Ex-College Principals.
B	Religious	<15	<100	11	Registrar, Faculty Deans, Departmental Heads, Professor, Senior Lecturer, Lecturers, Ex-Lecturer.
C	Private	<15	<100	10	Professor, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Junior Lecturer, Ex-Lecturer, Registrar, Staff Welfare Committee Leader.

Determination of the composition of participants was done in such a way that those included were people who, through various organs and processes of the universities, participate or participated in decision making or were academics. Others were those who had retired from service, but played a critical role in shaping or implementing strategies which were deemed to be of interest to the study. Another category of interest was that of people who had quit the case universities. This was necessary in order to establish if reasons for quitting one's university were related to TM practices.

As it can be seen from the table above, cases B and C were quite small universities in terms of number of academic staff (less than 100 at each university) which they employed. Additionally, at less than 15 years old, they were still very young universities. This was in contrast with case A, which employed over 700 academics and in existence for over 50 years. The size and age of cases B and C might explain why saturation was reached earlier, 11 and 10 interviews respectively, than case A.

Throughout the thesis, participants are identified by their position/rank and a code. Letters A, B and C denote the case from which a participant was drawn and any number following the letters represents interview sequencing. As a result Case A has participants numbered from A1 to A17, while Case B has B1 to B11 and Case C has C1 to C10. Additional information regarding individual participants such as gender and length of service is provided in Appendices A1 to A3.

4.5 Data collection methods

In order to collect data from the selected cases semi-structured interviews, documents, and opportunistic methods were used.

4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are one of the most important sources of case study information (Yin, 2009), they are the main road to multiple realities (Stake, 1995), and are generally liked for their extreme flexibility, lending themselves to use at any stage of the research process (Brewerton and Millward, 2001). In-depth semi-structured interviews were therefore used in this study. These were useful for their ability to achieve balance between the two extremes of structured interviews (which constrain interviewees and do not allow for probing) usually applied in quantitative research

and unstructured interviews (which adopt a non-constrained, open-ended fashion). As Brewerton and Millward (2001:70) put it, semi-structured interviews “incorporate elements of both quantifiable, fixed-choice responding and the facility to explore, and probe in more depth, certain areas of interest;...easy to analyse, quantify and compare, but allowing interviewees to explain their responses and provide more in-depth information where necessary; and ...minimizes the temptation to spend too long on peripheral subjects, and the danger of losing control to the interviewee...” Through such a balance and by adopting a realist epistemological position, it is possible to gain insights into interviewees’ psychological and organisational lives outside of the interview situation (King, 2004).

The nature of the study required interviewees to give accounts of what really influences TM ideas and practices in their organisation. In-depth semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to obtain a full range of experiences on how universities dealt with talents. The realist epistemological approach would be realised at data analysis stage where various interviewee accounts would be compared in addition to comparing such accounts with data collected through other methods.

4.5.1.1 Conducting semi-structured interviews

The initial interview strategy was to conduct the interviews face-to-face at interviewees’ offices. This was possible for 30 of the 38 interviews. Of the remainder, two were conducted face-to-face at the interviewees’ homes because their schedule could not allow them to be at the office at the appointed time; one was conducted over telephone because the person was working for a different university in another country; one was conducted face-to-face in a hotel lounge because the person was on a very busy schedule and would not be in office for ‘quite some time’; and three interviews were also conducted face-to-face in a car at the work location because the interviewees were sharing an office with at least three other people. In one case an interviewee was accommodated in a staff room which housed more than ten members of staff.

All interviewees consented to being digitally-recorded. This allowed the researcher full focus of the conversation process. The researcher took note of areas that required further probing. The greater benefit of such recordings was that a record would be

available to which the researcher could go back to re-read if need be. Moreover capturing the actual words of the person being interviewed has no substitute and the words recorded help a great deal in sense-making during data interpretation and analysis phases (Patton, 2002). In addition to keeping such recordings, interviewees agreed to any future contact if the researcher needed to seek further clarification on the subject matter. Appendix B contains the interview guide. In terms of duration, interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. The majority of them were 60 minutes long.

4.5.2 Documentary analysis

Institutional documents, where available, were collected for review. These included minutes of meetings, correspondence, periodic reports, studies/evaluations, policy documents, and strategic plans. Stake (1995) notes that such documents serve as substitutes for records of activity that the researcher could not observe. By reviewing such documents the study sought to fill likely gaps in vital information which may not be covered by incumbent office holders. Respondents may not remember every detail or they may simply choose to selectively disclose. Documents review therefore provides an avenue to validate interview claims. In instances where an interviewee mentions documents which would otherwise not be accessible to the researcher, efforts were made to probe for relevant contents of such documents. A case in point was when a high ranking university official disclosed ongoing work regarding a policy that would likely have a bearing on talent practices in one of the universities but could not be accessed by the researcher because such a policy needed to go through the appropriate approval processes.

Although documentation has inherent weaknesses of irretrievability, biased selectivity, reporting biases, and access, its strength lies in being stable (can be reviewed repeatedly), unobtrusive, exact and have broad coverage (Yin, 2009). It is worth mentioning that the advent of technology has made certain types of documents becoming increasingly accessible through internet searches. In the case of some Malawian universities selected documents were downloadable from university websites.

4.5.3 Opportunistic data collection

Flexibility of the case study strategy in the use of multiple methods also allows the case study researcher to be sensitive to opportunistic as well as planned data collection (Hartley, 2004). In keeping with this tradition, over and above the planned data collection methods, the study made use of a professorial inaugural lecture, informal staff discussions, and observations in order to enhance understanding of the local context.

Professorial inaugural lecture is a tradition in the public university where newly promoted professors give lectures on their area of expertise. Absent for some time because of resource constraints, one of the lectures that took place during data collection was of particular interest to the study because of two key aspects. Firstly, the professor giving the lecture was a participant in the study, and secondly, the lecture was contextually relevant as it was a discussion of national level HRM. It was deemed to be of direct relevance in setting the context for this study. In addition to recording the lecture, a printed copy of the presentation was provided by the professor.

With regards to informal staff discussions the researcher was sensitive to any staff discussions on the state of affairs regarding conditions of service and the state of universities generally and how other universities were doing in the country. Other discussions involved junior academics sharing experiences on how they were socialised into academia and their degree of preparedness to perform their roles. These normally took place in Staff Common Rooms and intranet forums.

Finally, observations provided additional information about the study subject and the case organisations. The researcher was keen to observe things like work environment and arrangements (for example provision of offices and office equipment). This was necessary because of the importance of the work environment in any discussion of talent.

All opportunistic data was captured by way of documentation (as in the case of inaugural lecture) and taking of field notes where appropriate.

4.6 Data analysis

All digitally recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. These and the various documents were read through for familiarisation. Transcripts were entered into NVivo, a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), to facilitate organisation and processing of data. This process was done bearing in mind Creswell's (2009) six steps of qualitative data analysis, which include organizing and preparing data for analysis; reading through the data; beginning the detailed analysis with a coding process; description of the setting; how the description and themes will be represented in the narrative; and interpretation of the data.

In order to make sense of the data, analysis was carried out at two levels. Firstly, within case thematic analysis using templates was conducted to tease out pertinent issues happening in each of the three cases. The template was generated following the process recommended by King (2012). The coding and template generation process which formed the basis of this analysis is detailed in section 4.6.1. Secondly, thematic (cross case) analysis using data matrices was conducted to help draw parallels and areas of divergence across the three cases. The matrix was developed from the summary of issues that emerged from the three cases to form the opening section of the cross case chapter.

Use of templates in thematic analysis emphasises hierarchical coding, and the central feature of the technique is development of a coding template, usually on the basis of a sub set of data, which is then applied to further data, revised and refined (King, 2012; Brooks et al., 2015).

4.6.1 Coding and template development

As indicated above thematic analysis using templates was employed in the study. In this section I briefly describe the coding and template development process from the initial template to the final template. The detailed step-by-step process of the changes that were effected from one template to another is contained in appendix C while each case's template as captured in NVivo is captured in appendices D1 to D3.

4.6.1.1 Constructing an initial template

The initial template was constructed on the basis of three transcripts from case A. Clustering was based on the research questions as well as background information of the universities. Figure 1 below depicts the initial template.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Background of interviewee | 4.3.1. Academics | 7.4. Work environment |
| 1.1. Career path | 4.3.2. Other staff | 7.5. Recognition |
| 1.2. Current role | 4.3.3. Students | 7.6. Talent visibility |
| 2. History | 5. Talent identification | 7.7. Problems |
| 2.1. University history | 5.1. Processes | 8. Organisational characteristics |
| 2.2. Talent management in university | 5.2. Responsibility | 8.1. Culture/climate/traditions |
| 2.2.1. General approach | 5.3. Standards/requirements | 8.2. Management style |
| 2.2.2. Policy developments | 5.4. Difficulties | 8.3. Ownership |
| 2.2.3. Leadership | 6. Talent development | 8.3.1. Public |
| 3. General talent management issues | 6.1. Training | 8.3.2. Private |
| 3.1. Leadership | 6.2. Other activities | 8.3.3. Religious |
| 3.1.1. Qualifications and experience | 6.3. Location | 9. Other universities/competitors |
| 3.2. Resistance | 6.4. Funding | 9.1. National |
| 3.3. Systems and structures | 6.5. Responsibility | 9.2. Regional |
| 3.4. Policies | 6.6. Bonding/accountability | 9.3. Global |
| 3.5. Financing/funding | 7. Talent retention | 9.4. Other sectors |
| 3.6. General difficulties | 7.1. Policies | 10. A.O.B |
| 4. Definition of talent | 7.2. Rewards | |
| 4.1. Qualifications | 7.2.1. Remuneration | |
| 4.2. Attributes | 7.2.2. Promotion | |
| 4.3. Classification | 7.3. Conditions of service | |

Figure 1 Initial template

4.6.1.2 Modification of templates

The initial template was applied to the three transcripts that were used to construct it in order to ascertain the degree of coverage of relevant themes. It was also applied to additional transcripts, leading to changes in the initial version. Two other versions were created before settling for the final template in version four.

The modification process involved a number of activities. They included creating and inserting new themes at different levels of the coding hierarchy, upgrading or downgrading themes, rewording themes, deleting themes, and merging themes. An example will suffice to illustrate what exactly happened in the modification process. The theme 'responsibility', which describes who is in charge of or accountable for the various talent management activities, was included as a second level theme under top level themes 'talent development' and 'talent identification' in the initial template. Going through interviewees' accounts it was clear that 'responsibility' ran across other themes as well. Consequently, second level theme 'responsibility' under 'talent identification' and 'talent development' was changed to become a top level integrative theme called 'responsibility'. This change was reflected in the second version of the template. After coding the interview transcripts using the modified templates, a decision was made determining version four as the final template. It is depicted in figure 2 below.

1. Background information
 - 1.1. Career path of participants
 - 1.2. University history
2. General talent management issues
 - 2.1. General approach
 - 2.1.1. Growing talent
 - 2.1.2. Buying talent
 - 2.2. Policy developments
 - 2.3. Leadership
 - 2.3.1. Qualifications and experience
 - 2.3.2. Academic leadership
 - 2.3.2.1. Authority
 - 2.3.2.2. In the past
 - 2.3.2.3. These days
 - 2.4. Systems and structures
 - 2.5. Financing/funding
 - 2.6. General difficulties
 - 2.6.1. Resistance
 - 2.6.2. Time constraints
 - 2.6.3. Lack of management's support
 - 2.6.4. Communication problems
 - 2.7. No talent management programme
3. Definition of talent
 - 3.1. Qualifications
 - 3.2. Attributes
 - 3.3. Classification
 - 3.3.1. Inclusive understanding of talent
 - 3.3.2. Exclusive understanding of talent
 - 3.3.2.1. Academics
 - 3.3.2.2. Other staff
 - 3.3.2.3. Students
 - 3.4. Whose definition of talent is it?
 - 3.4.1. Participant definition
 - 3.4.2. What participant thinks is university definition.
- 3.5. Understanding of talent is evolving
4. Talent identification
 - 4.1. Processes
 - 4.1.1. Earmarking
 - 4.1.2. Responses to adverts
 - 4.1.3. Selection process
 - 4.2. Standards/requirements
 - 4.3. Difficulties
5. Talent development
 - 5.1. Training
 - 5.2. Other activities
 - 5.2.1. Mentorship
 - 5.2.2. Exposure
 - 5.2.3. Induction
 - 5.2.4. Continuous professional development
 - 5.2.5. Leadership development
 - 5.3. Location
 - 5.4. Funding
6. Talent retention
 - 6.1. Policies
 - 6.2. Rewards
 - 6.2.1. Remuneration
 - 6.2.2. Promotion
 - 6.3. Conditions of service
 - 6.4. Work environment
 - 6.5. Recognition
 - 6.6. Talent visibility
 - 6.7. Bonding
- 6.8. Problems
- 6.9. No retention
- 6.10. Opportunities to do own things
- 6.11. Patriotism
- 6.12. Status of university
7. Organisational characteristics
 - 7.1. Culture/climate/traditions
 - 7.2. Management style
 - 7.3. Ownership
 - 7.3.1. Public
 - 7.3.2. Private
 - 7.3.3. Religious
8. Other universities/competitors
 - 8.1. National
 - 8.2. Regional
 - 8.3. Global
 - 8.4. Other sectors
- A. Responsibility (INTEGRATIVE THEME)
9. A.O.B
 - 9.1. Political leadership
 - 9.2. Gender
 - 9.3. University status
 - 9.4. The future of talent management

Figure 2 Final template

4.6.2 Within and cross-case analysis

The developed templates were used to carry out within case and cross case analysis. This was possible through the processes of decontextualisation and recontextualisation (Ayres et al., 2003). According to Ayres et al. (2003:872) “data are decontextualized when they are separated into units of meaning through coding and sorting, and are recontextualised as they are reintegrated into themes that combine units of like meaning taken from the accounts of multiple research respondents”. By coding the data in NVivo using templates it was possible to capture commonalities across cases and the richness within cases clustered around themes. The coding templates eased the process of immersion in, and making sense of each case, comparisons across accounts of individual interviewees within each case as well as comparisons across cases. In this sense cross case analysis allowed for the delineation of factors that may have contributed to the outcomes of the cases or explanations as to why one case is different or the same as others (Khan and VanWynsberghe, 2008).

4.7 Ethical considerations

The researcher adhered to ethical conduct of research. Prior to conducting the study, the protocols were approved by the University of Manchester Business School. Specifically, informed consent and confidentiality were the key ethical issues. Informed consent was obtained at two levels, organisational and individual participant levels.

At the organisation level permission was sought from heads of institutions or administrators who were briefed about the study’s objectives, use and treatment of findings. They were also told the type of participants in whom the study was interested. They were given copies of the study’s information sheet and consent form.

At the individual participant level informed consent was obtained by provision of participant information sheet (Appendix E) and informed consent form (Appendix F). These detailed what the study was about and what their rights to withdraw at any

stage entailed. Although the informed consent form was provided to all participants most of them opted to provide consent verbally rather than signing.

Confidentiality was ensured by explaining how the data collected would be stored, who would have access to it, and how it would be treated during writing up and during any form of dissemination. Key to gaining confidentiality were assurances that the information would be used for academic purposes only, that only the researcher and supervisors would have access to the data, and that respondents would not be personally identified during writing up. For the benefit of the case organisations, participants were informed that available opportunities would be used to disseminate the study's findings, including internal dissemination avenues.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the means by which the study's objectives were actualised. As a qualitative study that employed the case study strategy its population and sampling frame were universities, their current and former employees. Semi-structured interviews and documents were the main sources of information. The chapter also highlighted how data analysis was carried out, how methodological triangulation was used to gain credence in the interpretation of findings, and ethical considerations.

The chapter that follows is the first of three empirical chapters and presents results of TM practices in a public university.

Chapter 5 . Case A

This chapter provides the findings on how Case A dealt with TM issues. Prior to understanding how the university addressed talent identification, development and retention there was need to understand how talent was perceived. This was important as it set the tone for the assumptions that were relied upon on decisions of identification and recruitment, development and retention. There is evidence, as shown in the literature review chapter (chapter two), of how understanding of the concept informs practice. This chapter is arranged in six sections as follows: the first section provides an overview of the case, the second addresses the question of how talent was defined or understood in the university. This is followed by a presentation of how talent was identified, developed and retained. The fourth section focusses on factors that influence application of TM practices which is followed by a section that looks at prospects for talent management and the chapter's conclusion.

5.1 Case overview

Case A is a public university established by government through an Act of Parliament. As is the case with all other public universities in the country, its chancellor is the state president who assumes the role of the institution's nominal head. However, he or she approves appointment of vice chancellor, who is regarded as the principal academic and administrative officer of the university. This appointment follows recommendations of the university council. Technically, the chancellor appoints the vice chancellor. Colleges are headed by principals while faculties and departments are headed by deans and heads, respectively. Faculty deans and departmental heads are elected by a popular vote by members of their faculty or department.

The university's 2012 enrolment stood at slightly over 12,000 students. Of these, less than 5 percent were MA students while PhD students were less than 1 percent. The rest were undergraduate students. The university planned to raise student enrolment to 15,000 undergraduate students, 2000 master's degree students and 500 PhD students by the year 2017.

The university employed slightly over 1400 people and approximately half of these were academics. In terms of academic staff, only 25 percent had PhD qualifications. The rest had either a master's degree or a bachelor's degree. For a very long time the university's human resource management and development (HRM&D) function was managed by non-specialized human resource officers until recently when HRM professionals were recruited to manage the function. At the time of collecting data for this study one of the HRM professionals had only been recruited a couple of months earlier.

5.2 Conceptualisation of talent

According to Ross (2013), the way institutions define talent has implications on how organisations implement talent management practices and ideas. As a result it is logical to start from understanding a specific organisation's conceptualisation of talent. It is precisely for this reason that this section presents how Case A conceptualised talent. A constellation of participants' definitions or understanding of talent culminated into what one academic said, that:

Generally the word talent is reserved for more rare knowledge, skills, experience or competencies which are found in a few and such people are crucial or core in the functioning of the organisation. It is about specialised knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired through long and extensive training, exposure, and interaction to the extent that talents cannot be easily replaced. The term talent recognises how rare and central a person is. It could be scientists, engineers, or academics in various areas of specialization (Professor-A14).

The above quote is illustrative of most participants who drew attention to what would characterise talent: rare, core and difficult to replace. Certainly the above conceptualisation draws on the exclusive approach to talent, a narrow view premised on workforce differentiation (Ross, 2013; Adamsen, 2016). In this case, there was differentiation in broad terms between academics and non-academics with the dominant view suggesting that academics needed to be categorised as talent because academics were rare and difficult to replace. This, however, was not the only view. Other participants defined talent in terms of broad, inclusive approaches arguing that the university is *a multi-talented organisation* (HRM Professional – A4) that

encompasses both academics and non-academics. It needs to be highlighted that the above participant's role involved dealing with both categories of staff. This fact is particularly important because HRM practitioners would want to be seen to be treating all employees equally (Gelens et al., 2014; Ross, 2013) and avoid the awkward situations of having to deal with people categorized as non-talent. Ostensibly two viewpoints in terms of conceptualisation of talent emerged from the foregoing: the exclusive and inclusive approaches. Nevertheless, as I explain below, evidence suggests that the exclusive conceptualisation was the dominant view.

Dominance of the exclusive view that was biased towards academic talent became apparent when one examined what was actually happening in the organisation in practice to the different staff categories. It was a case where actions spoke louder than words particularly with respect to the university's guiding principles on recruitment, development, and promotion that were indicative of a differentiated workforce.

When it came to recruitment of staff a higher premium was placed on academics than their non-academic counterparts. This reflected the university's different expectations on academics and non-academics. Potential academics needed merit or distinction in their first degree, regardless of the fact that they might already have a master's or PhD degree while for non-academics the quality of their qualifications did not matter. Participants felt that these differences were a clear indication of whom the university regarded as talent as it recognised the need to:

have very good candidates for academic positions but when it comes to the other positions we don't say much about the quality of the certificate which means that for the other positions we are just interested in someone who is able to work (Dean of Faculty & Senior lecturer- A15).

For academics:

Asking for merit or distinction was not just to be fancy. It was because departments wanted to ensure that they recruited quality academics and then obviously they would have quality input into the system (Pro Vice Chancellor - A8).

The above two participants, both professors and academic leaders, confirmed differentiated quality standards set on joining the university on either academic or

non-academic career pathways. Such differentiation on the basis of class or quality of degree clearly tied in with the exclusive understanding of talent, which in this case had a narrow focus on knowledge mastery. In that sense merit or distinction were proxies for mastery. Such recruitment practices gave the impression that academic talent mattered more than non-academics who occupied “peripheral” space around the university’s goals. Once staff were recruited into their respective pathways the trajectory in their career development took a differentiated nature as well.

Talent development practices were also a clear reflection of the notion of differentiation. Although the broad aspect of talent development is dealt with in section 5.3.2 it will suffice to state here that, once recruited, there were clearer development options for academics while those for non-academics were blurred. To put it simply the general expectation was that once recruited based on first degree or masters degree, academics were in transition to a higher degree until they attained a PhD degree. The same could not be said of non-academics whose attainment of higher degree qualification (post-recruitment) was more of personal choice than an institutional expectation. This was reflected in the university’s training plans as observed by the newly recruited HRM professional:

I was looking for training plans for CTS, administration and academic staff. It so happens that there is only training plan for academics. And usually it’s only training of these academics which is emphasized even in our strategic documents (HRM Professional - A4).

The implication here was that although academics and academic leaders were showing signs of change in their views on further training for non-academics the reality was that non-academics still occupied a peripheral place in the university’s plans. Except for isolated cases that received satisfactory support just like academics, the majority of non-academics were yet to enjoy the level of support on their development similar to that enjoyed by academics. The third practice that confirmed existence of a differentiated workforce, according to participants, was the contrasting degrees of difficulty for academics and non-academics seeking promotion.

There were marked differences in what needed to be fulfilled before an academic was promoted compared to non-academics. While the usual ‘publish or perish’ was

in force an academic member of staff had to also demonstrate that they engaged in community service as well as university service by taking up leadership positions prior to their application for promotion. While this might be standard practice in most academic labour markets there was certainly a feeling that it was much easier for a non-academic to be promoted than an academic. For the non-academics, length of service and a good recommendation from a supervisor were sufficient grounds for promotion to the next rank. The feeling, according to one academic leader, was that much more was asked of academics than their non-academic counterparts:

In terms of promotion for us academics it's very stringent but for them it's not as stringent. We do not demand a lot from them. For example if you are a staff associate you are told that you can't be a lecturer until you have a masters. Without a masters you remain at a particular level. But for them, with a bachelors they can move up, as long as they serve a particular number of years, and become an equivalent of a senior lecturer. I don't even understand how, without benchmarks, they equate their progression with academics because for one to become a senior lecturer the requirements are both clear and stringent (Professor - A5).

The contrasting degrees of difficulty in the requirements for promotion might reflect the perception and expectations placed on a differentiated workforce, where one segment was predestined to achieve more than the other.

From the foregoing, the influence of institutional practices on how organisational members conceptualized talent was clear. Practices were indicative of exclusive understanding of talent although top leadership would like to portray an inclusive perspective. The concept of core and non-core staff influenced most decisions on talent and this differentiation was part of the discourse even in university documents. For instance Kamwaza (2007) advised on the need to treat salary raises for support staff with the same respect as that of core staff to avoid disputes. This advice followed differentiated treatment among core and support staff when government, two years earlier, approved a sixty percent salary increase to academic staff and forty-five percent to other staff. Decisions like this reinforced the exclusive perception of talent in the university. As alluded to above, views of top leadership suggested a desire towards inclusive perspectives to talent. As expected most

participants' understanding of talent was not shared by the university. Furthermore agreement between participants was not widespread. While some felt that the university made no attempt to describe or define talent others suggested that the university's understanding was narrow (focussing on the knowledge component) and yet others felt that it was too broad to mean anything, particularly when conceived in inclusive terms. This lack of a shared understanding or conceptualisation of talent was not without consequences.

One of the consequences for lacking common understanding was the frustration of those who considered themselves talents and were not recognised as such by the university. Potentially, perceptions of unfairness or injustice arose in situations where 'non-talents' were treated better than 'talents'. That was the case between academics and administrators in the way perks were distributed across the two staff categories. The bone of contention was that some administrators got perks for doing their routine work while academics had access to perks only when they assumed leadership positions such as faculty dean or departmental head, triggering debates on distributive justice or equity (Gelens et al., 2013) among academics and fostering hostilities between academics and administrators. This underscores the need for an institution to have clarity and a common understanding of who their talents are and how to treat them.

Clearly, participants' and the university's understanding of talent was different. Individuals held a broader understanding in the sense of the breadth of attributes that talents should possess. It also became clear that the understanding of talent was evolving to include, while remaining exclusive, all staff categories and to challenge long standing assumptions that excluded other staff categories from the talent bracket.

In terms of direction and degree there was a feeling that broadly ascribing talent to all academics and not the rest did not reflect reality on the ground. There was recognition that even among academics the degree of talent differed to the extent that some might not qualify as such in most attributes that constituted talent in their specific context or if talent was considered an outcome of years of "*long and extensive training, exposure, and interaction leading to growth of knowledge and skill which cannot be easily replaced*" (Professor - A14). The other area where participants recognized change was with regards to the position that talent was

exclusive only that such exclusivity needed to apply to non-academics as well who were usually considered as peripheral to the university's core business. This was recognition of the idea that behind efficient academic systems were teams of talented 'non-core' staff that provided the supporting functions. As one academic noted:

I think we need to be broad and consider others as talent. For example people in ICT provide critical support to the academic system. Their systems for online registration of students and other systems that they have designed and implemented are very powerful and can be considered core. Because ICT is at the core of what we do, we need the very best in that area and we should consider them as talent-they are specialized and the best are rare to find on the market (Professor - A14).

It was being understood more and more that talent was broader than simply getting high academic scores in a subject area. For instance participants appreciated the fact that in the university's search for talents it was important to be able to capture such things as values of a person and how such values fitted in the university's own values, ability to transfer skills from one situation to the next, being articulate, ability to take initiative, personality, interpersonal skills, behaviour, commitment, and the ability to bring funding to the university-especially with dwindling government subvention and the need to diversify sources of funding.

5.3 Talent identification, development and retention

5.3.1 Talent identification and recruitment

Some participants indicated that identification and recruitment of talent shifted from earmarking to tournaments. This was attributed to pressures from two sources. Firstly, the 'Malawianisation' policy was a call by government requiring the university to shift from a predominantly expatriate staffed to a predominantly Malawian staffed university. The second source of pressure was the political transformation at national level from one party dictatorship to multi-party democracy which inevitably meant that the university needed to align its processes to democratic principles.

Earmarking was a process through which heads of academic departments identified outstanding students in their third or fourth year of a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree programme for possible recruitment into staff associate positions upon graduation. Staff associate was the entry point into the academic career. The process involved performance tracking by a respective head of department. Meanwhile the student would be informed, largely informally, of the department's or university's interest in their performance. Using the principle of earmarking, academic talent was initially perceived as potential that would need to be further developed before they could begin contributing to core university business:

The major emphasis was ensuring that young, promising students are recruited as staff associates and then be developed systematically up to the highest level of academic qualification (Pro Vice Chancellor - A8)

The above participant implied a history of a clear talent identification strategy and clearly designated role players in that strategy. During that era of earmarking, a staff associate would be on the ground for a year or less before going out of the country to study for their masters degree. Upon return with a masters degree and assuming the rank of lecturer they would still be considered in transit, on their way to study for a PhD degree. The transition period would be two years or less.

The underlying philosophy behind earmarking and such fast-tracked academic talent development was that the university needed to develop its own staff who would eventually replace expatriate staff. It therefore needed to grow the talent itself. The need to 'Malawianise' the university without sufficient postgraduate programmes that would supply the next generation of academics meant that identifying and grooming undergraduates was the only course of action to achieve its staffing objectives. Although positions would be advertised in the local print media, earmarking relied so much on the authority and strong recommendation from heads of departments. It was common practice to offer individuals staff associate positions without having to go through interviews. One participant, who enjoyed the authority bestowed on heads during the years when earmarking was the default practice recalled that:

When teaching and assessing, we were able to identify a very strong student who would be encouraged to work hard. Immediately the student passes with a distinction or credit, he or she would be directly employed as a staff associate. It was not even advertised for people to compete. Compete with whom? We have already identified them (Professor - A14).

Such an approach, especially the aspect that people would be recruited without first advertising for the positions and interviewing, was characteristic of the dominant logics that allowed heads of departments and deans of faculty more discretionary power in identifying and recruiting talent. This was prior to democratization of processes following a change of national level politics from a single party state to multiparty politics. The country's dictatorial regime implied that the university was operating in context where national political leaders had a grip on the affairs of public institutions. It would not be surprising to see similar tendencies in organisational processes for the university whose chancellor, although ceremonial, was the president. To reinforce this, one academic pointed out that in the university's formative and developmental years the influence of a strong political leadership was evident. For instance, the idea to 'Malawianise' was Dr Banda's (the country's founding president) policy, who indicated that:

We must develop this university to a level where it has Malawians as the majority. Let's malawianise, but not fully because you cannot have a situation where everybody should be Malawian. You need to have integration of ideas (Professor - A6).

In addition to providing policy direction, Dr Banda's influence as both president of the country and chancellor of the university would be seen in the creation of some academic departments by presidential decree. For instance the Department of *Chichewa*, Malawi's national language, was a result of such a decree.

Although no longer widespread, a variant of earmarking as an exclusive means still existed for part-time appointments. These appointments only required departments to identify and recommend recruitment of individuals without the competitive advertising and interview processes.

Following political change from dictatorship to democracy in the 1990s, tournaments became an exclusive means to the identification and recruitment of talent in the university as the national level political transformation created corresponding transformation in the country's legal framework. Issues of freedom of association, discrimination and equity were clear in the constitution. These in turn permeated the terms and conditions of employment in the various sectors. As a result of the new constitutional order organisations, including the university, needed to exude principles of transparency, accountability and good governance by advertising openly for positions and ensuring that there was no nepotism, corruption and favouritism in its recruitment processes. Prior to this period, use of tournaments was in conjunction with earmarking and at times earmarking was the only means. In tournaments people respond to adverts and attend competitive interviews before being offered positions. Although identification of excellent performers at undergraduate level still happened, it was only meant to encourage those individuals to apply for advertised positions so that they joined a competitive pool of job applicants from which departments could select. Doubts still existed as to whether the university's tournament system had completely replaced the earmarking system in practice. Some participants expressed fears on instances when interviews appeared to be conducted in a way that was aimed to simply confirm an already identified candidate for a position, suggesting potential weaknesses in the processes used to capture the required range of attributes in talents and maintenance of standards.

The observation on weaknesses was especially true considering the evolving conceptualisation of talent among participants. In keeping with the practice of tournaments, the university advertised for positions, shortlisted candidates and invited them to attend interviews, during which the best were selected to fill the positions. This aspect was not been faulted. What had been faulted was the actual conduct of interviews. There was a growing feeling that to a large extent the questions being asked during interviews focused on knowledge of the subject area, which was good, but there was need to capture much more than knowledge. For instance person-organisation fit was considered critical and some participants recognised a number of attributes and values associated with the university such as critical thinking, problem solving, integrity, fairness, honesty, and love of

scholarship among others which the system failed to take into account during identification and selection of talents. One academic observed that:

We do not capture whether the person is a critical thinker or good at decision making or problem solving, that basically is lacking and some questions lacking on our panels have to do with checking whether the person shares values of the university or the recruiting department (Union Leader & Lecturer - A11).

Obviously no organisation wants to end up with wrong people in its ranks. Expressing such an observation using a marriage metaphor, another academic believed that the university's narrow focus on academic grades or academic track record masked many behavioural and personality characteristics that eventually proved problematic in managing people that did not fit in the university. He noted that:

No amount of effort by the university can motivate a wrong person. If you brought a wrong person, no matter what, it's the same thing with marriage, if you marry the wrong person you can try all you can but the person won't change and you will have to put up with them (Former College Principal & Professor - A9).

The above participant emphasized the need for a robust talent identification and selection system without which the university, already peculiar as entry into the academic career is predominantly tenure, would not be competitive. Regardless of performance employees enjoyed a sense of security that tenure brings and therefore the university was putting up with some individuals who were misfits. There were fears that some sections of the university failed to progress or strengthen structures because of a few influential individuals who appeared bent at frustrating the system.

The other area that suffered from a weak talent identification and selection system was maintenance of academic standards. The feeling among both administrators and academics was that standards were not always adhered to during recruitment. While that might be a result of labour market supply and demand configurations it was necessary to examine how the internal system contributed to such a state of affairs. The focus on academic scores in recruitment was meant to uphold the university's

academic standards. However, two forces conspired to undermine the ethos on standards. Firstly:

Right now the recruitment system is trivialised, I am sorry to say. A department recruits and who is scrutinising? Is there capacity in departments to handle recruitment of staff? Do we even verify the qualifications that people present when we are recruiting? Our systems are so relaxed that nobody follows up (Former College Principal & Professor - A9).

The questions raised above implied a talent identification and selection system that did not give confidence to the final selection decisions. The participant's observation was that weak or fake qualifications or applicants could easily be passed as fit for recruitment. Secondly, the university's shift in policy from recruiting first degree holders to those with at least a master's degree resulted in recruiting departments taking their attention off the bachelor's degree. One academic's view was that although requirements had not changed, people were no longer vigilant:

I don't think the requirement of a credit BA degree, even if you have a MA, has changed but in terms of actual recruitment I wonder how many of us check that. If anything, for me, the emphasis is whether one has a MA or not. We hear of cases of certain individuals within the system who don't satisfy the initial requirement of the minimum of a credit (Lecturer - A10).

Understandably, not everybody was happy with stoppage of recruiting first degree holders into academia. For some the reason was that it was impossible to locally source master's degree holders in their disciplines and going global to buy such talent was unthinkable because the university was not competitive. For others, recruiting first degree holders ensured growing own talent whereby first degree holders that showed promise were recruited into academic roles and then supported in their development until they attained PhDs.

5.3.2 Talent development: Academic talent and academic leadership talent

Development of talent in the university took a number of forms. From a focus on long term training leading to higher academic qualifications to efforts on short term training as part of continuous professional development, there was clearly a two

pronged approach in terms of the sort of talent that the university developed. Academic talent and leadership talent development were pursued to varying degrees using different approaches.

Academic talent was broadly understood to encompass the ability to conduct the university's core business of teaching, research, and consultancy & outreach. These were actualised by, among others, ability to exercise classroom control, excellent teaching, ability to provide excellent feedback to students through a number of avenues, possession of research skills which included proposal writing, manuscript writing and publishing, and curriculum development.

In order to develop its academic talent the university used both internal and external initiatives. Externally, the main form of development was training towards a higher degree at masters and PhD levels. This was the university's primary focus on talent development in line with its talent growing strategy. With faculty dominated by expatriates, the university was able to train Malawians for civil/public service jobs. However, it needed to pursue a different training policy in order to equip Malawians for university teaching positions and this was pursued by following the 'Malawianization' policy which allowed for many promising young Malawians to be earmarked for teaching jobs and sent abroad for their MA and PhD training. This approach was largely financed by externally sourced scholarships. In the event that one failed to access an external scholarship, which was rare in those days, then government would provide funding. The 'Malawianization' policy and the dearth of local academic talent on the labour market entailed that the university pursued a 'talent growing' strategy as opposed to a 'talent buying' strategy.

Other external talent development initiatives were in the form of fellowships and attendance & participation at external conferences or seminars. Through paid leave and mobility opportunities, the university allowed its 'qualifying' academics to travel abroad and undertake fellowships at external institutions. Qualifying academics would, for example, take a year out on sabbatical leave to pursue their research interests or teach or a combination of the two at a different university. The benefits of such mobility were immense on the academics involved as most of them used such opportunities to publish, network and gain a different teaching experience. Whether these experiences benefitted the university and whether the university

actively engaged with lessons learnt out of these external opportunities remained to be documented.

Reliance on external opportunities did not always benefit the university though. One downside of external opportunities was that they also led to talent flight as the working conditions and rewards at the host institutions or in the host countries were too good to be abandoned. With regards to how talent flight was happening, one academic who was tempted to abscond during his sabbatical recalled:

When I went out for my sabbatical I was getting twice as much my salary and I could have easily stayed on because they wanted me to. That's what happens. Actually that's how we lost young brilliant minds in the sciences when they went away for sabbatical or post-doctoral studies. Having compared what they were getting just on post-doc they could not resist absconding. And besides the pay package, working conditions out there are brilliant such that you have everything you need to grow professionally, not here (Professor - A6).

Internally, the university had a history of shadowing or understudying. Although the practice had been sporadic for the past decade or so it was still being talked about by those who had been in the system for longer than fifteen years as having benefitted from it. The talent identification and selection strategy of the university emphasised on growing talent. The strategy required staff associates to shadow or understudy senior academics as part of their training while in transit to their MA studies. During this period they were being gradually introduced to academic work by being involved in tutorials or helping in running laboratory sessions and marking student scripts. Most were not involved in teaching and for those who were, it was usually one course under close supervision of a senior academic. While this was true for long serving academics, such opportunities were rare at the time of data collection. Due to academic talent shortages staff associates were allocated heavier teaching loads than ordinarily designed, and in most cases they were staying longer than two years before proceeding for further studies. This was compounded by the competitive external scholarships landscape and dwindling university funding forcing the university to abandon the policy of recruiting first degree holders into academia.

Internal seminars were another way of developing academic talent. These were used to develop academics' teaching, research, and consulting capabilities. Through these, academics periodically underwent training in research and dissemination, the processes involved in teaching, curriculum development, and grants management. Periodic research dissemination seminars (at department, faculty or university levels) were part of the academic culture, providing multiple learning opportunities and allowing upcoming academics a preparatory ground for their professional development. Historically, many of these seminars were led by seasoned academics who took every opportunity to offer mentorship to young academics, a trend that changed over the years as senior academics were caught between engaging in personal moonlighting such as undeclared consultancies and being available on campuses to provide the much needed leadership and guidance in academic affairs. The other aspect that needs pointing out is that of academic leadership talent.

Academic leadership talent was developed in two ways: training and exposure. Newly elected leaders went through a leadership programme that prepared them on how best to perform their roles. It was an in-house programme facilitated by experienced members of the university. The programme recognised the diversity in leadership or management experiences or lack of experience in leading or managing. In a way this approach mitigated the fact that the system used to elect academic leaders failed to segregate between those who were ready to take up positions and those who needed to be developed before assuming leadership positions. The challenge to such an approach was that in the face of financial constraints, it was less cost-effective to categorise all elected leaders as requiring the standard training programme on offer, especially when these leaders were to be in office for two-year terms albeit with a possibility of being re-elected for another term.

Exposure was widely cited as another way of developing leadership talent within the university. Most academics and academic leaders acknowledged leadership and management experiences acquired outside the university as having prepared them for their academic leadership role. For most, prior to joining the university they were engaged in leadership and management roles and gained many transferable skills. For instance some learnt how to deal with TM issues with their previous employers. For others, their skills developed during their university employment by being exposed to other organisations through secondment and appointments to other

organisations' boards of directors. One academic, now retired, attested to the value of exposure as follows:

I must say I had the privilege of serving on the boards of many organisations, both local and international. Through that I have learnt a lot about leadership and management, some good leadership and management and some very bad leadership and management. And when you are involved in assessing other people you are able to assess yourself and see how you compare with others. That is one aspect how I have acquired skills in leadership and management (Former Vice Chancellor - A12).

Within the university opportunities for exposure were many. People acquired leadership experience through participation in different university committees, at departmental, faculty or university level. By its very nature, the authority to run affairs of the university rested in committees in keeping with logics of collegiality. By assuming leadership or membership of these committees or task-forces academics, both seasoned and upcoming, had opportunities to demonstrate their leadership capabilities and acquire new skills. It is important to note that as a university that was organized based on collegiality traditions academic leaders such as heads of departments and deans of faculties did not hold executive powers because power was with organisation members. Consequently, academic leaders' influence on academic TM was quite limited. It is one thing to develop academic talent and yet another to retain it. As observed in chapter three as well as reported by participants, retention of academic talent in the university was one of its greatest challenges. However, the following section examines why those that stayed with the university did so.

5.3.3 Talent retention: why did talents stay?

There was a feeling among most participants that the university did not actively engage in a drive to retain its talent. If anything, participants indicated that members of staff retained themselves. Participants bemoaned lack of implementation of most provisions in their conditions of service and that top management seemed not to care when talent was lost. This, as one academic noted, was in contrast to what was happening in other organisations that valued their people:

If there was retention one would expect the university to look after its staff very well and be concerned when staff quit. In other organisations the moment you have an exodus of staff it comes to the board who examines what they are doing wrongly and strategize on how best to correct it so that they arrest the exodus. I am sorry but I will say that we don't have retention here (Professor - A5).

In view of such views among staff regarding their employer's retention efforts, the study sought to find out what attracted those that were still with the university. A number of reasons were given indicating a mix of what the university was seen to be doing right and stayers' self-interests. In search of why those that stayed with the university did so, I shed light on the role of mobility opportunities, tenure, opportunities for further training, prestige, patriotism, and how the university dealt with discipline or lack of commitment.

To begin with, academic labour markets consider mobility as academic practice. Sabbatical, leave of absence and study leave were some forms of leave provided for in the conditions of service. Although some participants indicated displeasure at their working conditions, others made use of mobility provisions to temporarily exit the university either for new pastures or to acquire higher qualifications. For instance people gained access to fellowships or employment with other universities which had better strategies for research and publishing. They then used these for promotion purposes upon return to the university. Quite a number of participants partly attributed their rise in rank to opportunities afforded to them during their sabbatical or leave of absence, or while away on PhD training as one academic recalls his own experience below:

Now to be promoted you need to have resources to do research. If you don't have that you get frustrated so you leave and go where there are resources and advance yourself. If you ask me for example, if I had not gone to [name of university] for my sabbatical I wouldn't have got the professorship. That one year I was in [name of country where university is] provided me with all the resources, the time, books, facilities to do my research and publish (Professor - A6).

Clearly the above participant highlighted the benefits, particularly to individuals, of mobility and how that facilitated career progression. As alluded to above on mobility that is linked to training, the university's strategy of growing rather than buying talent resulted in the university's commitment towards talents' attainment of higher qualifications.

Even in the midst of efforts to change its recruitment policy from growing own talent to buying it there was an acceptance among the university's leadership that it would take time before the policy fully shifted to 'talent buying'. Meanwhile, the high proportion of talents in need of training to PhD level coupled with limited postgraduate training programmes in the country's universities, travelling abroad for training while retaining one's position and remuneration with the university remained a much liked practice. The absence of funding for their studies from the institution did not deter potential talent because of the perception that applying for external scholarships while affiliated with a university gave one an advantage over competitors.

Secondly, life-long tenure was a condition of service that aided retention. Traditionally, the university recruited academics on tenure upon entry. The only exception being that of staff associates who qualified for tenure after two years when the position holder rose to the rank of assistant lecturer. This sense of security, where one was tenured for life or until the age of sixty, coupled with the lack of performance management system also partly contributed to retention:

We have a system here of tenure. So I am tenured for life or until sixty. And I can leave this campus anytime without telling my bosses, nobody cares. I don't even have to tell my head my whereabouts. I don't even have to tell my dean, so we have a problem (Professor - A5).

The above participant, while appreciating the benefits of security of tenure on retention, bemoaned the fact that this type of retention might be a result of a poorly managed tenure system characterised by indiscipline. It was a system where standards were difficult to enforce because of other non-functioning human resource systems. This led to a culture of laxity in dealing with misbehaviour among employees or other system failures.

By implication, the standard expectation that actors should face consequences for their actions did not seem to matter. This culture was partly perpetuated by weak institutional structures and the exercise of power (or lack of it) by different agents .

Aside from the above, the perception that the university did not actively engage in efforts to retain its talent implied that people retained themselves by taking advantage of weak structures and systems to utilise university time for personal gain, sometimes at the expense of quality teaching and learning:

I think people do retain themselves because they know that they will always be here and that the autonomy and freedom which are prevalent in the university allow people to find time to go and do consultancy work and come back, do part time somewhere and come back. In so doing there is an indirect way of retaining them by not being hard on them. That laxity allows people to be undisciplined without any consequences. You see people cancelling classes anyhow and nobody cares (Professor - A14).

When people engaged in personal consultancies or part-time work, there were no mechanisms to enforce declaration of such work and to ensure that the university benefited. It was a weakness acknowledged in the university's strategic plan that "*undeclared consultancy work is due to failure to implement consultancy policy*" allowing a culture of laxity to flourish.

The laxity culture was further exemplified by metaphors that were sometimes used to describe the university and the behaviour of some academics. *Post office box* and *roof* were two of such metaphors used by some to describe the university as a workplace. The metaphors described the idea that while there was not much the university actively did to retain them, talents were happy to stay for the convenience of a university address and the university's brand. These were in turn used to acquire external personal assignments over which the university had no control:

People can decide not to leave but they will not be productive. Some people are just here so that they get a roof to operate from while doing their own personal things. People just use the university brand. I overheard a very senior colleague saying that this place is just a 'post-office-box' (Lecturer - A1).

Such metaphors reinforced the feeling that people did not necessarily need to be at work all the time. Just like a temporary shelter, they could come and go without being bothered. The understanding that was conveyed when people talked of freedom or autonomy was one of having time to engage in personal activities without being accountable to the institution. In cases where this was discussed it was almost always in comparison with organisations or universities where attendance and staff activities were closely monitored. The picture that came out clearly here was one of trade-off, where a participant pointed out that “*What we don’t have in hefty salaries here is compensated for by time and autonomy*” (Head of Department & Lecturer – A13). This sentiment was mostly true for those whose expertise was highly sought after in other sectors. They easily earned extra income through moonlighting or running own businesses. For others, quitting for greener pastures in industry or other universities became the appropriate course of action. Examples were those that joined other universities in the region and beyond where salaries and other benefits afforded them a comfortable life without resorting to moonlighting.

Thirdly, a sense of patriotism supported the notion of self-retention. It combined with hope for better remuneration in future among participants and the level of attachment they developed with their students as reasons for them to remain with the university. As one academic summarises:

I see that there is some kind of commitment, commitment to one’s country, very patriotic. This is mixed with feelings of hope that maybe things will change for the better (Director of Research Centre – A3).

These were people who had opportunities to quit but never did because of the attachment they developed towards their students and the wish to contribute towards national development by teaching students in one’s home country. They derived satisfaction from witnessing the impact of their labour on students as they graduated and joined the labour market. While acknowledging the relatively low salaries as a push factor, one participant still hoped for a better future, noting that sometimes employees were able to influence salary decisions through collective bargaining using staff unions and welfare committees. Industrial action for better remuneration was a constant feature in the trade unions and university relations. Remuneration was relatively low compared to other universities in the sub-Saharan Africa region.

When I asked a former employee, now professor at a university in another country within the region, to reflect on his decision process to quit, search for a better pay was one of the decisive factors as the quote below suggests:

I think at the time the financial aspect was I think probably more attractive. The money I was getting [in my former university], and with my field where we didn't have as many consultancy opportunities as our friends, say in economics, I knew it would be very difficult for me to accumulate enough money and start, for instance, building a house or even being able to buy a decent car (Former Senior Lecturer – A7)

The above participant emphasised the importance of remuneration that is sufficient enough to afford staff living standards commensurate with one's status without the need to supplement it with external income like that earned through personal consultancies. He also pointed to the need for the university to implement its own conditions of service such as house ownership schemes. Lastly, the other factor that came into play for stayers was prestige.

The age, history and ownership structure of the university gave it a reputation as a premier university in the country. Over the years it managed to attract top talent at national level both in terms of students and staff. It shaped the way university education was viewed and run in the country. It was not surprising that prestige was mentioned as both a pull factor and a reason for retention. It was a view of the majority of participants that:

We are in a privileged position because of age and the history of our institution. Because of being both the oldest and largest we have a reputation of being The University and that helps us to attract and retain the best staff in comparison with the other institutions. So among the people who want to work in the universities the majority of academics would want to work here. We retain staff better on a certain level based on history because there are people who still say it is The University (Head of Department & Associate professor - A2).

The above notwithstanding there appeared to be a feeling that prestige could not be relied upon to retain talent forever. The university needed to do more because some of the emerging competitors had started to promote vibrant academic cultures. For instance one academic leader indicated that, with her colleagues, they were envious that a department like theirs at a competitor university managed to organise a conference (to which they went) which among others, led to publication of a book. When another conference was announced by the same department:

We were like what! What are we doing here? So, sometimes it's things like those, history or prestige aside that we stand a chance of being overtaken if we don't wake up our sleeping giant (Head of Department & Lecturer - A13).

The above sentiment suggested that although people were working for a prestigious university, less prestigious competitor universities appeared to be doing something enviable that put them on the right trajectory towards developing capabilities to attract top talent nationally. Other conditions of service such as education benefits for dependents of staff were rarely acknowledged although they had a positive effect on retaining talents.

Through the efforts of staff unions the university introduced a staff benefit that allowed a qualifying dependent (up to two dependents) of a staff member to access university education for free. The benefit was in two forms: access and tuition fees. Access applied in the event that the dependent failed to qualify on merit but who nonetheless met the minimum requirement for entry. The other condition of service was access to medical services. Changes made to an initial (staff paying and claiming money later) medical scheme enabled staff members and their families to access medical services at a cost to the scheme. In the new arrangement staff members' monthly contributions to the scheme were paid for by the university while those of family members were the responsibility of the staff members.

5.3.4 The role of human resource function

One of the issues raised with regards to identifying and recruiting academic talent was the role of HRM departments or professionals. This function fell under the office of the registrar, overseen by the assistant registrar (human resources). It was clear that the role was limited to observing and facilitating what academic

departments did. Specifically the role involved advertising vacancies, receiving applications for onward transmission to academic departments (which shortlisted candidates) and arranged interviews after the departments had made decisions on panellists. During interviews the HR professional simply observed and provided advice on purely administrative matters. In practice they were not official members of the panel. This lack of authority meant that even if they observed political games being played they appeared helpless in correcting the process as one HR professional observed:

As an independent observer during interviews you just observe everything. Sometimes you just realise that a person who didn't perform has been consistently given high scores and you realise that these people had already agreed prior to the interviews on how to score this person. So for you as an independent observer there is not much you can do (HRM Professional – A4)

The above participant drew attention to what was happening when academic departments were left to make decisions on recruitment without systems for individual panellists to account for their scoring decisions. She further drew attention to the powerlessness of HR professionals regarding decisions on academic talent identification and recruitment. In a broader context the above quotation relates to power in terms of who defines and knows talent. Once these are identified then the implicit understanding is that they can also be trusted with the process of identifying and recruiting talent.

5.4 Factors that influenced application of TM ideas

A number of factors influenced the application of talent management practices in the university by way of either facilitating or constraining application of such practices. This section examines the role of leadership, policy-practice dissonance, financing, resistance and diffusion of responsibility in facilitating or restraining application of TM practices.

5.4.1 Leadership

Leadership was cited as one of the key factors that constrained or facilitated talent development practices at various times during the university's existence. In keeping

with the act that established the university, academic leaders in the positions of heads of department and deans of faculty were elected and not appointed. The terms 'elected' and 'appointed' were applied in a specific sense. As provided for in the university's act:

There shall be deans of faculty [deputy deans of faculty and heads of department] elected to that position by members of the faculty [or departments in case of heads] present at a meeting convened for such purpose

While the legitimate expectation was that senior members in the faculties or departments would take up such responsibilities, the contrary was usually the case. Seniority and experience did not always matter because even junior academics were elected to such positions regardless of availability of experienced and senior academics.

Possible reasons for the above situation were indicative of a university that had lost grip on its own systems and structures. Firstly, at the dawn of multi-party politics in Malawi organisations, including the university, were eager to embrace democratic principles. This eagerness resulted in the democratization of academic positions of deans and heads. Academics, especially those who were junior or mid-level, felt that there was nothing special about these positions and that anybody could become head or dean. Although the requirement was that even during elections for these positions senior members needed to take up responsibility, in most cases junior and mid-level academics were elected. In most departments and faculties canvassing for votes became the order of the day to the effect that elections turned into more of a political activity than an academic one. One academic leader lamented what the exercise had turned out to be:

We want popularity contests and these days it has become worse. People buy beer for others for them to be voted into office. In my faculty, it went to the dogs last time where people were saying they are buying beers for this one and that one so that they have their vote. It has become like a parliamentary election which is very, very unfortunate for an academic institution, I must stress (Professor - A5).

The consequences were that those elected might have lacked capacity to provide academic leadership. In cases where junior and mid-level academics took up leadership positions at the expense of senior academics the result was that the institution lost its authority in two important ways. One, it was hard, if not impossible, for these young leaders to enforce standards in the event of a senior academic's indiscipline or misconduct. Two, because the election process took power away from top management to faculty or departmental members, the elected leader's loyalty was likely to follow a similar pattern. The university ended up with a majority proportion of its leadership not serving its interests, and the implication was that, "*the institution is captured by its members*" (Professor - A14) because:

Sometimes you give responsibility to someone who is junior so that you can bully them and get everything you want. When you have a staff associate or a mere lecturer and when a professor disappears it is difficult for the junior academic to demand to discipline the professor. (...) there is negligence of duty and deliberate design to abuse the position of head of department (Former Vice Chancellor - A12).

The process of electing heads of department and deans of faculty had been a contested one. On one hand supporters of the existing democratic process argued that appointments promote loyalty to the appointing authority and were a recipe for politicisation of the process. This position was held by a section of academics. On the other hand were those, another section of academics and those in leadership positions, who were advancing an argument for turning positions of heads and deans into executive positions where incumbents were appointed. They argued that changing these positions into executive ones would give the office bearers authority over the affairs of departments and faculties and help to improve standards. Efforts to turn the positions into executive ones were on hold since 2013 following parliament's failure to debate a parliamentary bill which sought to revise the university's Act. The failure was a result of lobbying by an academic staff union and education activists after observing that the proposed bill "*threatens academic freedom and the best interests of the university and the nation as a whole*". Among the many bones of contention, as highlighted by the academic staff union, was the

idea that by setting up Appointments and Disciplinary Committees to recommend who gets appointed as head or dean the proposed bill:

Lamentably removes democratic and transparent methods and processes of identifying academic leaders, particularly at the faculty and departmental levels.

However, the lobbyists differed in their proposed solutions to the contest on the process of appointing academic leaders. The academic staff union unequivocally suggested the need to “*Revert to a system where the head [and dean] were elected by academic members of staff, with the principal appointing*”. This position differed with that taken by the education activists who acknowledged that deans in some universities in Africa held executive powers and needed to be academics of a certain scholarly standing and rank. Their view was that there was need to seek balance between upholding academic freedom and ensuring that office bearers exuded some degree of authority. Cognisant of such practice elsewhere within the region the activists proposed two options. The first was that the status quo could remain but that the university needed to stipulate and enforce minimum qualifications for aspirants for these academic leadership positions. The second was in support of what the proposed act stipulated that people needed to apply and be interviewed by an Appointments and Disciplinary Committee. However, instead of a specific office or officer effecting the appointments they suggested that a committee be responsible to avoid the contentious issue of appointees being loyal to an individual or office.

Linked to democratization, by way of consequences to the university, was the issue of perks. These were extra rewards that deans and heads, and their deputies earned by virtue of their positions. In a university where salaries were far from being competitive, people jostle for perked positions not necessarily to provide leadership but as a survival strategy- earning perks to make ends meet. This was particularly true for those that had no access to consultancies. Otherwise, many senior academics had curved out a lucrative consulting market to the extent that taking up academic leadership positions was considered a waste of precious time.

Leadership in the above sense, seen through the lens of the process that promoted people into selected positions and the outcome of such a process, was clearly a constraining factor. However, at different times of the university’s existence,

leadership at different levels of the university structure played a pivotal role in facilitating application of TM practices. This happened when particular leaders sought to promote a set of ideals relevant to TM. The examples below illustrate how leaders in the university influenced certain aspects of TM practices at different times. A former vice chancellor (A12) indicated that, “*I was asked by the vice chancellor to set up an in-service training programme*” while another, with regards to recruitment, disclosed that:

It depends on the principal because as an interviewing panel you only make recommendations. Some principals have been afraid of judging people on their personalities declaring that what happens outside the classroom should not affect the candidate. But it has also happened when another principal justified not appointing a candidate because of character, suggesting that the university needs role models in lecture rooms (Professor - A6).

This was a clear case of situations when one in authority shaped the conduct of other key players in the university, or how powerful institutional actors shaped institutional logics. Similarly, it was observed that management’s attitude was also a key factor. The role of attitude relates to talent mind-set (Silzer and Dowell, 2010).

The attitude of management played a critical role in either constraining or facilitating TM practices. The following example shows how one participant was baffled by management’s attitude:

Remember there was a time when [academic leader] said that if you want to leave you can leave. The attitude of our employer must change. The attitude of management must change. You know, when you have good talent, you reward your talent. You do not degrade your talent (Professor - A5).

The above sentiment was symptomatic of management that seemed not to care whether talents stayed or quit regardless of implications on the university’s core business. It is worth pointing out that management here was used to the exclusion of academic leaders such as deans of faculties and heads of departments. The participant, herself and academic leader, referred to top university leaders. There had usually been an antagonistic relationship between academics and administrators,

prompting one participant to suggest that “*academics are seen as causing irritation to administrators*” (Director of Research Centre - A3). Such attitudes fuelled resentment among categories of staff especially between those in management and academics. This was aggravated by the perception that those in management were simply providing a support service and did not deserve special treatment although ironically, management positions were allocated perks over and above their salaries.

5.4.2 Policy-practice dissonance

Lack of harmony between policy and practice was another constraining factor on TM practices. From identification to development to retention there were incidences of dissonance. What happened in practice was contrary to what the university’s policy prescribed. With regards to recruitment of first degree holders, the implicit policy was for the university to grow its own talent. Staff associates were meant to understudy senior academics before proceeding for further studies. Non engagement of staff associates in independent teaching was meant to maintain academic standards. However, over the years as retention of senior academics proved difficult in some departments, staff associates had taken on more teaching responsibilities, to the dismay of the participant below who served in various capacities within the university including that of vice chancellor:

When I was head of department in the 1990s, there was no year when a staff associate taught (...) our objective has been to maintain standards. If they are teaching now, I don’t know but we have maintained that no staff associate should teach. That’s why I am saying that the people that are giving staff associates and demonstrators a lot of teaching work don’t care. And when I hear that heads of departments insisting on giving staff associates courses to teach, that’s nonsense, it’s nonsense (Former Vice Chancellor - A12).

Another area where policy-practice dissonance was apparent was conditions of service particularly those that spelt out privileges for staff. The quote below draws attention to the university’s failure to implement its own conditions of service, consequently leaving staff dissatisfied:

If people's satisfaction was based on what is contained in their contract documents then the university would be able to retain most of its top academics. However, the practicalities tell a different sad story, that not much contained in the documents get implemented. For example conditions of service contain such provisions as house loans, vehicle loans and other personal financing mechanisms but these don't happen (Lecturer - A10).

The university's own strategic plan acknowledged this fact when it stated that *weak policy implementation and weak enforcement of decisions, rules and regulations* were an inherent weakness that prevented it from realizing its potential. This recognition indicated an organisation's internal environment where various instruments meant to facilitate application of talent management practices were not actualised, potentially compromising employees' psychological contracts.

5.4.3 Financing vis-à-vis operating autonomy

The university was established under an act of parliament and the country's sitting president becomes a de-facto chancellor, unless he or she declines. All the four presidents that came after the founding president never let the chance of being chancellor pass them by, even in the face of resistance and calls to rid the university of undue political interference. Government's oversight on the operations of the university was therefore quite visible and inevitable since it was wholly funded by government.

Finance is the key to TM practices. But I should also add lack of operational autonomy because the university is considered as other parastatals and sometimes there is uniformity or standardization of circulars that are going to others [which] are also copied to vice chancellors to take note of them (...) there is always a tendency to link the [university] with behaviours expected in the mainstream parastatals (Professor - A14).

It appeared as though that those in the university had resigned to the reasoning that *"he who pays the piper calls the tune"* (Former College Principal & Professor – A9) as a consequence of its structural arrangement. Such an arrangement appeared to reduce the university's degree of operating autonomy such that decisions, for

example increase in tuition, assumed greater political than economic nature even in instances when there was economic justification or in the face of declining subvention. This limited the university's resource basket to what government provided which was usually less than what the university needed to operate optimally.

It would be unfair to fail to acknowledge how the university, by virtue of being a public entity, benefitted from such a structural arrangement. While some participants focussed on the political interference as a negative influence others observed that the university, and other public universities, accessed benefits that accrued by virtue of being public universities and their strong links to government. For instance, in terms of academic talent development, public universities accessed scholarships that were funded by government and/or government's external partners. The other benefit was that even though funding for daily operations was below requirements the university could still afford to send people away on training for the duration of their studies while maintaining them on payroll, something unheard of in private or religious universities because of financial constraints. In addition to these benefits, other individuals benefitted by way of skills development and social capital through employment on secondment in government departments. In some cases these in turn benefitted the university.

5.4.4 Internal resistance

Resistance was cited as one of the causes for the university's failure to make much progress on TM. As a university with a federal or collegiate structure it had some colleges that were more receptive to change than others. Some of the proposed changes, such as turning positions of heads of departments and deans of faculties into executive positions and introduction of staff appraisal systems that would incorporate students' feedback had the potential to influence application of TM practices. One of the key drivers of internal resistance was the desire by some powerful institutional actors to maintain the status quo for personal gains. One participant who acknowledged politicisation of systems and processes in the past as a possible source of resistance to some proposed changes felt that some of the resistance was not justified. On resisting calls to evaluate academics, this Professor (A5) lamented that:

We are bad on that as members of staff because we are the only university that I know, at least from my knowledge of international universities, where there is no appraisal. That appraisal system is important (...) and I don't blame management. It's us. We don't want to be evaluated and we have made excuses of saying no, no, no you haven't enabled the environment for me to teach. But I am teaching!

Some instances of resistance were motivated by the desire to maintain the status quo so that structures remained weak and subjected to abuse by some staff. A proposed shift towards appointment of heads and deans through a competitive process and affording them executive powers was an example of change that generated resistance among academics. Those that proposed the change argued that appointing people to these offices in executive capacity would give them the much needed authority for making decisions that were in the interests of their departments and faculties. As such any resistance to such a change was perceived as being inspired by those that feared that doing so would jeopardise personal benefits that accrued from the existing weak set up which was subject to abuse once weak or junior and inexperienced individuals who could easily be bullied got elected. Those making the opposite argument suggested that appointments would put in place heads and deans who would be puppets of the appointing authority and used as weapons for witch-hunt.

5.4.6 Diffusion of responsibility

One of the questions that research participants were asked related to the responsibility for TM practices. This was necessary in order to determine participants' impressions of whether implementation of TM practices was properly catered for within the university's structures. The interest was on whether there was a specific office, committee or person tasked with the role of initiating and/or implementing TM activities. Participants indicated multiple points of responsibility depending on TM activity. These points included offices of vice chancellor, Principal, vice principal, Deans of faculty, and heads of departments. Other responsibility points mentioned were Committee on University Teaching and Learning (CUTL) and persons at the rank of professor. These multiple decision making points had the potential to cause confusion, inaction, lack of commitment or conflict between decision makers. For instance CUTL's responsibility was to ensure

that newly recruited academics were equipped with the necessary skills to teach in the university and to carry out other core activities. The committee's establishment was premised on the idea that not every academic was a trained educator and that even those that studied education did so with a focus on secondary school students. They still required training on higher education delivery. Ideally CUTL's key responsibilities were workshops on teaching, assessment, research and publishing skills. However, activities for this committee became sporadic and went on longer periods without conducting any training or workshops. Partly, the reason for such an erratic scheduling of activities was inadequate financing. Another important reason could be that university leadership felt that the responsibility for sustaining CUTL rested in deans of faculty. As one of the members in CUTL suggested:

We had prepared an activity to orient and refresh staff in 2012. But when we submitted a budget on this to authorities we were told to go to individual deans to ask for funds. To us, that meant the activities were not useful and we noted that with time CUTL activities were not even budgeted for. Every time we had activities we needed to beg for money and we felt we shouldn't bother (Union Leader & Lecturer - A11).

This was despite the fact that people still felt that CUTL's activities were critical to the functioning of the university and therefore required to be budgeted for centrally. Lack of support towards activities like those of CUTL might be indicative of the emergence of a fluid structure that exposed the university to a lack of focal point or office responsible for spearheading TM. Whereas one would expect such a task to be the domain of some HR Directorate or related office, the university had been slow in establishing such an office. Recruitment of assistant registrars who had specialised in HRM for deployment to offices of registrars was a new development. However, some participants were yet to be convinced of the usefulness of this development in view of the assistant registrar's low profile position, arguing for the creation of an entire directorate of HR. Other participants, however, felt that in TM terms, this was a move in the right direction as it might signal the start of a focussed TM strategy. Meanwhile the university continued to suffer the consequences of diffusion of responsibility as offices kept tossing to each other the responsibility of TM.

5.5 The future of talent management: Capabilities to compete for talent.

Participants' perceptions regarding the university's prospects to attract top talent appeared mixed. They felt that the university remained highly competitive at national level. However, doubts existed concerning its capabilities at international level.

At national level the university's capabilities to attract top talent remained promising although participants called for caution because of the emerging competition within the public university sector as well as with private and religious universities. In addition to the aforementioned sources of competition there were increasing calls, in view of ongoing public sector reforms, for autonomy of colleges that comprised the university. The absence of a "*super university*" to threaten the status quo and planned changes such as the proposed performance management system were perceived as critical towards retaining the university's status as "*the university*". Those that felt that the university's status was secure did so in the knowledge that establishment of many universities in the country had so far failed to shake the core of academic talent in this university, as one academic pointed out:

As long as the system is not threatened by a super university our status as destination of choice for those aspiring the academic career in the country will remain intact. The other universities are not a threat to us. Their status cannot overshadow ours because they are narrowly defined (Professor - A14).

This participant highlighted the status of the university at national level in relation to others. That only a super university would threaten its status suggested that the other universities were of lower status and reputation. The narrow focus of the others, if anything could only be a threat to selected faculties and departments. One academic leader drew attention to this lack of actual threat and stated that:

I don't remember any academic who has left our university college for the new university. We have people in science who could fit at that new university but they did not apply even when positions were advertised which means that we are still able to attract and retain our

academic talent in the face of competition from these other universities (Dean of Faculty- A15).

The above notwithstanding participants did not take the potential threat posed by the other universities lightly. They were aware of internal conditions that required redress in order to retain or further strengthen the university's respected status at national level. In referring to the university as a "*sleeping giant*" one academic leader feared that:

We stand a chance of being overtaken if we do not wake up a sleeping giant. If things continue the way they are right now then our university has a bleak future. If we are not giving enough incentives and if we are not holding periodic trainings we might find ourselves sliding towards mediocrity (Head of Department & lecturer - A13).

It appeared that other participants felt that mediocrity had already crept in. As one academic suggested:

If the quality of what we do remains mediocre, where nobody cares about what we are doing and what departments are doing, why should we attract talent? We will attract mediocrity, people who don't know why they are working, people who will come to us because it is prestigious to be in this university without understanding what it takes to be an academic (Professor - A6).

Such views on the state of the university's capabilities to compete for talent raised obvious tensions. Why did it remain the best, unfazed by national level competition for talent, when there were over fifteen other universities? The answer might be what the university had become to the others: a model university. One academic leader suggested that the university might not model others in the right way said that:

Unfortunately the scenario in Malawi is that if this university cannot do things right other universities will also not do their things right. A day when one university decides to do things right it will be the best but unfortunately most of these universities look up to ours as the standard. That's where the problem is. They believe that everything about this university is what should be happening. So,

yes, our university is the best when it comes to attracting, developing and retaining talents nationally (Head of Department & Associate Professor - A2).

This perception of a model draws attention to a number of other important factors that helped in building such a perception. The university's influence was not limited to what others observed. The majority of staff in the other universities was trained by this university. As a consequence such staff members might have been unwittingly acting as agents or shapers in the other universities. Other agents were members of staff who were engaged in the establishment of the other universities as consultants.

When the national model is weighed at the international level, however, participants passed a unanimous verdict on its capabilities to compete for academic talent. The reasons were related to the existing work conditions. Low salaries, poor working environment and poor academic culture are all cited to justify the non-competitive perception. For instance one academic leader said that:

Our capabilities to attract the best are very, very limited. You just have to look at the pay package. Apart from that package, the conditions to work and upgrade yourself are simply not there. See how pathetic the university's research budget is. If you ask me, this university can only attract desperate individuals. There is nothing here to attract genuine scholars. For the ambitious individual this is not the place to be and I don't blame them (Professor - A6).

As if to emphasise the above point, another academic who had served the university for over thirty years conceded that, "*If I was young I wouldn't worry about being in this university. I would be going to teach elsewhere, say South Africa*" before proposing that:

Unless we purposely, and in all awareness demand academic rigour in our teaching, our assessment, our research, I don't think we will attract talent internationally (Former College Principal & Professor - A9).

Calls for the university to refocus in order to reposition itself in the international academic labour market appeared to have been heeded, if efforts to change existing systems or introduce new ones are anything to go by. The planned performance

management system was a good example of such efforts. Throughout its existence the university had no such system. Another interesting area was the drive to review the existing Act of Parliament. The review proposed changes to management or leadership structures. Other policies or strategies were also developed in order to spur the university's growth or to respond to trends in the international academic labour market. All these point to a university aware of the need to be proactive and strategic in order to compete at the global stage. Whether these policies got implemented remained a different matter. So far the observed findings showed that many of the TM problems were not due to lack of policies or strategies but the wherewithal to implement them.

5.6 Conclusion, summary and case contribution to the thesis

In this chapter the thesis has explored how Case A conceptualised, identified, developed and retained talent. The university appeared to be one in its formative years judging by the struggles it faced in the competition for talent. The pre-democracy approach of earmarking and developing own talents seemed to have worked in fulfilling the requirements of the 'Malawianization' policy. The majority of academics were Malawian. However, once localization was achieved, not much was done to consolidate the quality of academics in the university as most, either under political pressure and interference on matters of academic freedom or for economic reasons, left the university for employment with other universities in the region and beyond. A summary of findings based on selected themes is presented in table 3 below.

Table 3 Summary of Case A's findings

S#	Themes	Summary of findings
1.	Conceptualisation of talent	Exclusive (academics)/workforce differentiation (academics vs non-academics) – core to the organisation and focused on qualifications, rare knowledge, skills and experience. Evolving to include a broad range of attributes and other staff categories.
2.	Talent identification and recruitment	Competitive ‘tournaments’ to align with democratic principles – formal and bureaucratic processes rigidly followed. Focused on knowledge mastery and failed to capture full range of talent attributes. Recruitment was mainly on tenure. Short-term and zero-hour contracts also in use.
3.	Talent development	Talent growing strategy that fully supported long term training leading to higher qualifications. Other forms of development: workshops, seminars, short courses, conferences and exposure (academic leadership talent).
4.	Talent retention	Self-retention as the university did not actively engage in a talent retention drive: culture of laxity characterised by ‘post-office-box’ and ‘roof’ metaphors. Stayers: life-long tenure, mobility opportunities, further training opportunities, prestige and patriotism.
5.	Factors that facilitate or constrain application of TM practices	Leadership: democratization of positions of Dean of Faculty and Head of Department (election rather than appointment through competitive processes), lack of leadership capacity, leader dependent implementation of TM practices, weak HR function, diffusion of responsibility (existence of multiple points of responsibility leading to confusion, inaction, lack of commitment or conflict). Policy-practice dissonance: lack of harmony between policy and practice where the university fails to implement stipulated conditions. Financing and institutional ownership: limited finances due to declining government funding and financial leeway regardless of the above limitation. Wider access to scholarship opportunities and opportunities for secondment. Internal resistance: dominant institutional logics based on collegiality traditions drive resistance towards logics that seem to suggest transfer of power to management or leaders.
6.	Capabilities to compete for talent	Nationally competitive and attractive. Internationally uncompetitive as it continued to lose talent to other universities in the region and beyond.

In conceptualisation of talent, for example, it has been highlighted that the university lacked common understanding, although participants felt that the university adopted

an exclusive conceptualisation of talent. It was also observed that the university focussed on qualifications and knowledge while ignoring other important aspects of what would constitute talent in its specific context. Participants shared an understanding that the way people within the university understood talent was evolving: it was becoming broader than what the talent identification process was able to capture

In terms of the university's capabilities to compete for talent it has been demonstrated that the university would remain an attractive option at national level and less so at a regional or global levels.

Finally, the case reported in this chapter makes two critical contributions towards addressing the study's main objective. Firstly, its unique organisational logics especially collegiality which is characterised by dispersion of power to organisational members as opposed to management helps answer the question on the influence of institutional logics. Secondly, as a public university funded by taxpayers' money and where government is a key and powerful stakeholder, it provides fertile avenues for the analysis isomorphic pressures.

Chapter 6 . Case B

Chapter six presents findings on how a religious university conceptualised talent, how it identified, developed and retained talent. The chapter further highlights factors that influenced application of TM practices and TM's future prospects in the university. Having looked at TM from a public university perspective in chapter 5, this chapter lays part of the foundation for the understanding of the influence of university ownership on talent management. It is arranged as follows: the first part deals with the issue of conceptualisation followed by a discussion on how talent was identified, developed and retained. The third part looks at factors that influenced application of TM practices. Thereafter the chapter looks into the future of TM and then the conclusion to the chapter forms the fifth part.

6.1 Case overview

Case B was a religious university accredited by government through the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) to offer degrees, diplomas and certificates. Structurally, it has a University Council and a Vice Chancellor who is deputised by three Deputy Vice Chancellors of Administration, Finance and Academics. Faculties are headed by deans who are elected by a popular vote by faculty members while departments are headed by heads who are appointed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor responsible for academics.

The university had an enrolment of approximately 1000 undergraduate students. There were plans to establish postgraduate degree programmes as one way of dealing with academic staff challenges. Of the forty-six academics employed by the university, only four (8.7 percent) had PhDs, thirty-one (67.4 percent) had master's degree qualifications and eleven (23.9 percent) had an undergraduate degree. The university's human resource management and development function was managed by non-specialized HRM officers.

6.2 Definition of talent

Talent can be conceptualized in inclusive or exclusive terms (Thunnissen et al., 2013a). Definitions of talent in Case B were dominated by a focus on qualifications,

high potential, value to the organisation, and organisational goals. In conceptualizing talent, most participants drew attention to three key features associated with talent in this particular context. Firstly, they focused on the right qualifications, skills and abilities perceived as useful to the university. As a result qualifications were used as a proxy for someone's skills and abilities during talent identification and recruitment. The second key feature was context. This was important in participants' determination of whether talent was exclusive or inclusive. In an academic context, for example, academic members of staff are key to fulfilling the institution's obligations while the other staff categories play a supporting role. Thirdly the prevailing understanding was that talent could also be looked at as potential, allowing for the possibility of individuals enhancing their qualifications, skills and abilities to a level desired by the organisation. The three definitions below illustrate the above key aspects:

Talent would comprise the right qualifications, skills, abilities that are necessary for an individual to deliver in their role (Dean of Faculty - B1)

Individuals who have high potential and are of a particular value to the organisation (Professor - B9),

To a large extent talent is defined by the nature of the institution and the roles or mandate that the institution would like to fulfil (Former Lecturer - B11).

Despite participants acknowledging that anybody could be talent the above illustrative definitions suggest that the dominant understanding was that of talent being exclusive, with a focus on academic talent.

The idea that talent was exclusive and contextual emanated from the understanding that the university, just like any other organisation, had core and non-core staff. In this particular context academics were core and had greater value in fulfilling the university's mandate of teaching, research and outreach:

In the context of a university, we are mostly dealing with academicians, those who are lecturing are the ones I would call talent because they are the core in our context and they should form the bulk of our staffing. Although talent applies to other categories

of staff but in a university like ours certainly the most worrying area would be the academic (Registrar - B10).

The above participant, a non-academic, acknowledged the existence of non-academic staff but recognised that academic staff were the category that was the institution's major worry. This was an admission of the rising competition for academic talent who were considered rare to find and difficult to recruit. The above notwithstanding, not all academics were considered talent. While the focus on qualifications was key during recruitment and one's career progression, additional factors came into play during subsequent contract renewals. These considerations included an individual's contribution to the organisation, their ability to deliver, commitment to the university and their behaviour or disciplinary record. The university's expectation of talent was that they needed to perform beyond the minimum requirements. In the event that the university was not satisfied with performance levels a contract was not renewed. Caution has to be exercised, however, particularly in an environment characterised by fear of top managers since non-renewal of contract might be due to reasons other than unsatisfactory performance or one's contribution. Some participants alluded to the fact that those deemed difficult to manage such as those calling for the establishment of a union were likely to face difficulties renewing their contracts. To illustrate the point, an example of perceived victimisation was given of academic members who were singled out as leaders of a failed industrial action when members planned to protest against poor salaries in view of rising living costs. Such feelings of victimisation were summed up by one dean of faculty as follows:

In a particular year people wanted to come up with a labour union. It almost succeeded in being established but it appears the leading persons of that initiative felt hunted and they left the institution and the idea died. But I think it is also worth mentioning that people feel trapped because there is a feeling on campus that management is using the contract renewal interview as a tool to punish those that do not do its bidding (Dean of Faculty - B1)

The above participant drew on real fears regarding top management's dictatorial tendencies that sought to counter any perceived destabilising influences or any attempts to reduce the influence of management's dominance. Efforts to establish a

union might have been inspired by existing unions in public universities which had a history of successful engagement with authorities on their members' rights.

6.3 Talent identification, development and retention

6.3.1 Talent identification and recruitment

Two methods, namely tournaments and personal recommendations, were used to identify talent in the university. While positions were advertised for applicants to compete in tournaments, personal recommendations depended on networks of heads of departments and vice chancellor or deputy vice chancellor to identify and interest individuals who were deemed to have relevant qualifications to join the university. In some instances the two methods were used simultaneously, particularly when there was an urgent need to fill vacancies. One academic recalled his own recruitment process in the following comment:

They had placed an advert in the newspaper and I applied. Before they even invited me for interviews the deputy vice chancellor (academic) told me over the phone to report for duties as a part-time lecturer because it was an emergency. There were initially two lecturers in the department who had both left. So I was the only one, a part-timer, managing the whole department, for three months. Thereafter they organized interviews where I was picked on full time basis. A colleague was also recruited during these interviews to make us two individuals in the department (Former Senior Lecturer - B7).

The remarks by the above former employee points towards the university's flexible institutional logics that allowed sufficient flexibility or leeway in the university's recruitment process, enabling it to respond quickly in times when temporary measures on staffing were needed. While such flexibility logics allowed top management to respond to immediate staffing needs, the other advantage was that quick decisions could be made on staffing needs of a strategic nature. For example there had been instances when the vice chancellor and deputy vice chancellor targeted individuals who were deemed to have the potential to contribute greatly

towards the institution's strategic goals and offered such individuals academic positions:

I was head of department and I got a phone call from the vice chancellor who wanted to introduce a new member of staff. He was honest enough to say that the university had poached her because of her experience and connections, and that as the university was still growing it needed such big guys in society. They met at a conference and he convinced her that she could join the university. She did not come for interviews. She was recruited just like that and such was the case with other individuals (Former Lecturer - B11).

While such an approach fits the prevailing understanding of a growing university where some processes and structures are not fully developed, it has the potential to undermine the role of line managers such as heads of department and deans of faculty in talent management. The potential for this approach to undermine line managers is based on the assumption that in order to build a talent mind-set, talent management becomes integral to the organisation culture such that every supervisor, manager or leader is expected to take responsibility and accountability for attracting, developing, deploying and retaining talent (Silzer and Dowell, 2010). Furthermore reliance on personal recommendation, even if implemented by line managers, has a potential downside too. There is high likelihood that a department would be staffed with acquaintances, sometimes at the expense of quality or potential, thereby making appraisal or assessment of talents or talent management highly compromised in its objectivity. These recruitment practices, however, were a reflection of processes that were once relied upon during the university's early years.

Once talent was identified, recruitment was on three year rolling contracts renewable on satisfactory performance. Such renewal could be done as many times as both parties were willing. In many cases the initial three year contract was preceded by part time engagement for a semester (about three months) which served as probationary period:

I initially came here as a part time lecturer when the university had just started and I was in that role for a semester before being interviewed for a full time position (Head of Department - B3)

Renewal of a contract followed performance appraisal. Having been subjected to an interview process again, other information on suitability for a further contract came from heads of department and/or deans of faculty as well as students. A unique feature in the university's recruitment practices was preference for older academics.

Although the official position stated that the university was an 'equal opportunity employer' there appeared to be an unwritten rule that preference be given to older people when recruiting for academic positions. A good proportion of academic positions filled by people who retired in other institutions seemed to support this unwritten preference. The preference appeared to be motivated by both strategic and pragmatic reasons. Strategically, the university needed to tap into older academics' social capital built over years of work experience. Such social capital was then meant to aid the university's student placement programme which in turn was designed to improve graduate employability. It was commonly understood that persuading organisations to absorb students on placement was more to do with networks or social capital than simply writing organisations. In that regard young academics were deemed to have comparatively smaller social capital base on which the university could build its placement programme.

Pragmatically, the university contrasted old academics, those perceived to have come to a *retirement home*, and younger ones, who either have a first degree or a master's degree. Since its main source of financing was student fees, it operated on a very tight budget. Additional staff demands on finances were therefore a burden better to be avoided if the university was to remain financially viable and sustainable. Older academics fit in this philosophy quite well. Firstly, they did not demand further long term training which might require them to be away for the duration of the training. Secondly they did not agitate for salary increases because most of them were also drawing income from their retirement package. Thirdly, the older academics were less mobile with regards to moonlighting such that their presence on campus was never in doubt and fourth, the older academics were unlikely to voluntarily turnover and this reduced the risk of costs associated with exiting and recruitment of replacements. On the other hand, younger academics carried with them a tag of being impatient and they were viewed negatively:

Many of the young people we have here are more impatient. They would like to have more visible signs of support for their own self-

development and some think that inadequacy of resources may not be enough reason for someone like that (Professor -B9).

Obviously the perception that younger academics are impatient, especially when held by an institution's decision makers, may be prejudicial to existing young academics or those seeking employment. Such perceptions have the potential to lock out or to push out talent.

6.3.2 Talent development

Talent development in the university was focussed on academic talent and encompassed both short term and long term training initiatives. The short term training initiatives were part of continuous professional development and were supported by the institution while long term training efforts were those leading to higher degree qualifications. These were largely the responsibility of employees who sought such training. The section below details talent development through induction and short-term workshops, followed by long-term training initiatives.

As part of its continuous professional development programme for academic talent the university provided induction and conducted in-house training. Such training was tailored towards teaching and assessment in recognition of the diverse backgrounds of academics, most of whom never trained as teachers at any level. These workshops were conducted annually. Induction of new staff members was another form, although it failed to generate consensus among participants as to whether it really happened in practice. The standard practice was that it ought to happen at departmental level where new staff would be socialised into the university system. Since this was a departmental activity and that departments varied in both quantity and quality of staff, variations in how induction actually happened were to be expected – from not happening at all to different degrees of emphasis:

There was no induction course. Maybe there was nobody to induct me, at least in my case because as I said I was head to myself in the department. The other staff member, who was also in senior management team would only come to teach. So induction, no. when I joined I was thrown at the deep end to swim or sink (Former Lecturer - B11)

Clearly this was one end of the spectrum where formal socialization never happened. The department did not have capacity to conduct induction. Talent development initiatives that did not suffer from limited departmental staffing capacity were university-wide workshops. Facilitators for such workshops came from within the university's education faculty who were called upon by university management to capacitate other departments and faculties on teaching. At other times external resource persons were engaged. For example staff from the country's examinations board, the Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB), and public universities would be hired to train staff on testing and measurement in order to address skills gap in those that were not trained as teachers:

We attended a course on how to set examinations and how to mark examinations at college level. This was facilitated by MANEB officials jointly with those from the University of Malawi's Chancellor College. The whole idea behind it was that the university did not want to take it for granted that everyone at that level knew how to set an examination paper and how to mark, so they had to drill us on that (Former Lecturer - B8).

While largely a teaching university in practice and therefore justifying the need to strengthen the teaching and assessment components, it was widely acknowledged that a university ought to be known by other core functions of research and community engagement. With regards to research the university made efforts to equip staff with proposal writing and research skills. In collaboration with the country's National Commission for Science and Technology (NCST) it offered research-related training to its academic staff. This followed establishment of a journal through which research results could be disseminated whilst providing a platform for talent visibility, identification, development and promotion.

In spite of financial challenges facing the university efforts were taken to build staff capacity through cheaper means such as induction and in-house training in order for them to effectively deliver on the university's teaching function. There was willingness by the university to support academic talent development in its core area of teaching. The above notwithstanding the university did not fund higher

qualifications. Since academics valued higher qualifications more, as expected, they did not rate the university highly on its support towards long term training.

Following a talent buying approach as the dominant strategy, long term training leading to higher qualifications was the responsibility of employees. As predominantly a teaching university, a master's degree was considered sufficient. With very few PhD degree holders among its academic talent, the university's approach was to recruit either master's degree holders or those studying towards a master's degree. Those that were recruited for academic careers while holding a first degree were expected to finance their own further education. Such a talent buying approach was manifested in contractual arrangements. There was no provision for paid study leave for those on long term training:

It appears there is no incentive for the university to send you to school because when you are going to school your contract is terminated. If you would like to have a master's or PhD I think it's a problem because there is no fund to support those wishing to upgrade like it happens elsewhere like the public universities. I think there if you find a scholarship it is entirely your personal effort and when you go that means quitting. When you come back you apply again and if there is a position they recruit you (Former Lecturer - B8).

Contract termination as alluded to by the above participant was certainly true for those who left the country for further studies or those studying within the country but could not avail themselves for teaching duties. A compromise was usually struck between the university and those studying within to the effect that as long as they maintained a certain level of teaching load they could always remain in employment. It was for this reason that a good number opted to train locally and within proximity of their workplace. For instance quite a good number of academics, especially those in the humanities and social sciences, pursued their master's degrees at local public universities in order to balance their schooling and teaching responsibilities. The university relied on external training providers because it did not offer postgraduate training. Efforts to develop postgraduate programmes for submission to the NCHE for accreditation were underway at the time of data collection. If developed and accredited, postgraduate programmes were envisaged to offer a two-pronged strategy

of talent development and widening access to postgraduate education, with the latter increasing the university's revenue base.

The above notwithstanding, the university's talent development landscape was changing as university managers began to accept the reality that buying academic talent at master's degree level had not worked with young academics who still held ambitions for further academic career development. These ambitious young academics showed the desire to upgrade themselves. If they upgraded without enabling policies and support systems that ensured return after completion, turnover would be the inevitable result. With this in mind, and although not fully implemented, changes were being effected to encourage staff to pursue further training in a supportive environment. As one administrator pointed out that:

The university council realised the need to change policy, that we can't continue doing things the same way. Certainly it's official now that so long as it's within the country people are encouraged to upgrade themselves. The only bit that is not yet done is sponsorship, we are still not seeing a lot of progress in terms of providing scholarships to staff, but it is there in the policy document. University council discussed and agreed that there should be a pool of money somewhere. It doesn't matter how much, but there should be some money reserved in the budget every year to support those on training (Registrar - B10).

Although the word remained that staff were '*encouraged*' there were possibilities that staff could later be supported with part-funding in the form of soft loans or grants while on training. With an in-built mechanism for return upon completion, such changes had the potential to contribute towards retention. As discussed in the following section, one of the reasons that the university performed badly at retention was the lack of opportunities for further development.

6.3.3 Talent retention

The dominant discourse among participants on the question of retention was that the university did nothing to ensure that talents were retained. However, not everybody had quit the university. This section is therefore approached from two perspectives. Firstly, the idea that making a decision to quit this university was easy, following the

thread that there was no retention. The ‘*training ground*’ metaphor was used to describe the state of talent retention fuelled by insufficient talent development opportunities and poor working conditions. The second part attempts to answer the question of why, despite the ‘no retention’ impression, others stayed. Reasons as to why others stayed included opportunities for moonlighting, commitment and lack of ambition.

When it came to retention of talents the impression that one got was that the university was a training ground, where people gained teaching skills and wait for opportunities at better institutions nationally, particularly public universities. As one former academic, now with a public university explained:

That university hires unskilled individuals who get skills right in the workplace. When they are skilled they leave the university and go to other institutions (Former Senior Lecturer - B7).

Concurring with the above, a dean of faculty indicated that the university’s performance on staff retention was very bad, and confirmed that academic staff turnover was very high. Confirming the “training ground” metaphor he said that:

What you find is that good people will come to this university because they want to gain some experience (Dean of Faculty - B1)

The good people would then use that experience as a springboard for kick-starting their career at other universities within the country. While the data on turn-over was anecdotal at best, the sentiments confirmed the perception that the university was poaching ground for others. While admitting the difficulties in coming up with actual data on turnover, one head of department who had been with the university for six years as an academic member of staff expressed the gravity of turnover as follows:

Ever since I joined this university a lot of lecturers have been seeking greener pastures in other institutions. I will give an example of a certain semester, not a year but a semester. We lost about thirteen lecturers which is quite a big number. And if you look at the places or institutions where they went, it was other universities which means that they were still into teaching but preferred other academic institutions. I think we lost some again last year, not the thirteen I mentioned. I have been here for six years but the lecturers

we have lost to other institutions exceed twenty. In short, there is little being done to retain talent here (Head of Department - B5)

When asked about his own situation, the participant did not hide the fact that he had been looking for a teaching job elsewhere only that opportunities in his specific discipline were not forthcoming. As is explained below reasons for what seemed to be a desperate situation included lack of a clear career progression, opportunities and support for staff development, poor working conditions and environment. Each of these is explained in turn.

Firstly, lack of concrete staff development opportunities was highlighted by many participants as a major contribution to academic staff turnover, particularly the younger ones who felt the need to advance their qualifications. However, for a university that was predominantly a teaching one and could not offer the security of tenure, young academics were left in a precarious situation. Competitors that offered support and opportunities for further training easily became institutions of choice to those seeking further development:

To me I think the major issue here is that we are not able to meet the vision of somebody because you feel that if you join the academic profession one day you will be a doctor or you will become a professor. So people should be in a position to see the ladder going up, that if I start from here I will walk the following steps until I get up. But those things are not there and you have a feeling that your end is very close so you don't have to stay on (Head of Department - B3)

The above situation was compounded by what participants called the absence of policy to guide talent development. However, this should be viewed in light of what one participant said, that, "*the incentive for the university to further develop its talents is not there*" (Former Lecturer - B11) since incumbents were able to fulfil the university's mandate under the existing terms of employment without the need for higher qualifications. For a university that was still young and developing it would take some time for it to attract and retain talent on the basis of offering career growth opportunities and robust talent development. It should be acknowledged that while

efforts were made to improve the policy aspect, any policy implementation was constrained by financial challenges.

Secondly, working conditions are at the core of any employment relationship and therefore may have an effect on whether people stay or quit the employment relationship. Two working conditions that came out clearly during interviews as responsible for failure to retain talent were remuneration and work load. Most academics blamed work load for being teaching heavy at the expense of research and community engagement while remuneration was deemed non-retentive.

The wider perception on remuneration was that the package was not enough. This was usually in comparison with public universities and to a lesser degree, other religious and private sector universities. Public universities were clearly ahead of the pack because they were funded by government while religious and private universities relied solely on tuition to finance their operations including wages. As a result, poor remuneration was one of the main reasons why academic talent quit the religious university for public universities and other sectors of the economy. For instance one former academic who was attracted to the university by the pay package when he was coming from a low paying civil service job cited pay package as one of the key factors to quit the religious university for a public one:

When I joined that university I was earning six times as much compared to my civil service job that time and definitely the perks were a big factor for me to quit government (...) and when I was coming here the salary was much higher (Former Lecturer - B8).

The figures quoted during the interview suggested that the participant almost doubled his salary by quitting the religious university. Furthermore, such a salary rise was over and above other opportunities associated with public universities such as support for further training. It was quite obvious that salary differences between public universities on one hand, and religious and private universities on the other were quite substantial. For instance a lecturer's salary in a public university was at least forty percent greater than their counterparts in the religious and private universities. The second aspect of working conditions was workload.

Workload was perceived alongside its link to promotion opportunities. Although the core activity of the university was teaching it was rather strange that teaching was

not highly regarded for promotion purposes, becoming a source of frustration to most academics since most of whom barely had time and resources to engage in research and publications, academic pursuits that improved one's chances for promotion. Since promotion is linked to publication, at least in theory, a disproportionate amount of time on teaching deprived academics of promotions. One academic leader drew attention to this when he said that:

What matters most for promotion here is publications and community work. Teaching doesn't feature. The emphasis is that we are scholars and as scholars we have to contribute to our discipline. So lack of that contribution implies inability and the problem that comes in is that it's not easy to be promoted because you are always teaching. You have lecturers who are teaching five courses. When do they find time for research and publications when you are teaching every day? So people cannot get promoted because they cannot publish and they cannot publish because they are overloaded with teaching (Dean of Faculty - B1)

This reflected the context within which academics worked and the lack of support for the wide range of academic work. If at all teaching was rewarded it was in respect of contract renewal during which input of students on the lecturer's performance and availability was considered. Another contextual issue leading to such poor working conditions was a culture of fear. As stated earlier, efforts to set up a labour union as a vehicle to voice out their concerns on work conditions were frustrated by university's top level management.

The lack of collective voice and other reasons for non-retention have to be understood in the context of competitors at national level, particularly the public university sector which are the desired destination for most academics in religious and private universities. While a compressive elucidation of issues across universities is provided in the cross-case analysis chapter it is necessary to mention here that both religious and private universities found it extremely difficult, if not impossible to compete for talent with public universities. Regardless of the failure by this particular religious university to favourably compete with public universities on talent it continued to operate normally, run by those who, despite lack of retention

strategies, chose to remain with the organisation. Below I discuss possible reasons for their decision to stay.

The preceding section explained reasons behind the university being a training ground and therefore quitting decisions being easy to make. However, as will be explained below, others found quitting decisions difficult to make and decided to stay on. I explain below how opportunities to moonlight, commitment and lack of ambition have worked towards retaining those that decided to stay.

Moonlighting has been one of the major attractions in Malawi's academia. While some people quit the university others looked back with a hint of regret, particularly with regards to the opportunities that came with staying in the area. A case in point was one former lecturer who quit to join a public university and relocated to a different city. He admitted that quitting was not an easy decision to make because of spousal resistance and missed business opportunities that his old workplace offered:

Quitting was not an easy decision at all given the fact that I was staying in Blantyre and I think Blantyre has more advantages than Zomba in terms of social amenities and business opportunities. When I was in Blantyre I was selling vehicles and I had a big market. It was easy to arrange with potential customers to view the vehicles. When I came this side my fears were confirmed. I noted that it is not easy. Sometimes I would actually lie when a customer calls to say where you are, I simply say I am within just give me forty minutes and I will be there (Former Lecturer - B8).

Clearly the above participant acknowledged a situation where the university was used as an operating base which ensured that one had a regular flow of income at a minimum level while supplementing it with own generated income from personal businesses/moonlighting. In such cases, employees were happy to stay as long as they were able to conduct their personal businesses.

Reinforcing the idea that academics engaged in moonlighting to supplement their low salaries was another academic who mentioned an extra teaching job in town:

Obviously the salary is not enough here but I can't complain. While I am full time here, I also go and teach students at a different college and I have been doing that for the past three years (Lecturer - B2).

The university's location made it easier for academics to commute between their place of full time employment and part time teaching in other surrounding universities or deal with customers in their other personal businesses as the earlier example suggested. This kind of reason should worry the university's management because clearly these employees' commitment to the university should raise some doubts. Given that participants' understanding of talent was tied to contribution and commitment towards the university, authorities should be wary of those who prioritised moonlighting over university business. The university needed talent to be committed to the institution.

Two forms of commitment were cited: organisational and occupational. Those that mentioned organisational commitment indicated their happiness at being associated with the university's image, which had benefitted immensely from the image of the church that owned it:

One of the major reasons why some people have decided to be with the university is that they want to associate themselves with its image. People respect the church that owns this university, particularly their education system (Head of Department - B3).

The university's association with the church appeared to have some influence. Apart from simply brand loyalty others felt duty bound to help the church, to which they were members, to deliver on its programmes. One senior lecturer attested to the above point when she pointed out that:

For some of us, like in my case, I am here basically to assist the institution because I am a member of the church. So I think twice to say if I go away, this is an institution for the church and I am a member (Senior Lecturer - B4).

Certainly the above participant indicated contemplating quitting only to be held back by her loyalty to the church. Although religion was never an issue during recruitment of academics, it certainly influenced decision making in some as exemplified by the above academic. Occupational commitment on the other hand was expressed by those who just loved the teaching profession. They derived satisfaction from sharing the success of their student as they progress from entry into university to graduation. As one of them said:

I like my job. I find it interesting quite a lot because you take the students from a position where they don't know anything to the point where you argue on a lot of principles by the time they graduate. I find that quite fulfilling because I have imparted something they didn't know and as I said I just enjoy my job, and I feel that what I get is enough to keep me going (Lecturer - B2).

While occupational commitment was expressed by participants across all ages it was clear that younger ones, while not intending to quit the occupation were actively seeking to quit the university. The older ones, like the one in the above quote never contemplated quitting the university because they were there as a retirement home. In any case opportunities for them on the labour market would be minimal. The last reason why others stayed was lack of ambition.

Lack of ambition was linked to the desire for further development and therefore with further association to those who considered the university a retirement home. It was used to describe those that joined the university post-retirement and therefore saw no need for further development, no need to make demands for pay raises, and did not see the need to progress their career further. In the context of ambition and age, one academic who joined the university after retiring elsewhere said that:

Staying here also depends on the age groups. The younger members of staff are more ambitious, they have a life to live and they would like to move as quickly as possible unlike the elderly ones who appear to be happy (Lecturer - B2).

The above view was supported by the idea that the older one becomes, the less attractive mobility is and therefore one becomes more stable. For the younger ones, whose ambition could be further training, a search for such opportunities was sufficient grounds to quit the university:

Despite the difficulty in deciding to quit, I was convinced that it was important for my own personal development. What I didn't like about that place was that you could not go for further studies. If I was to go and do my PhD elsewhere I had to resign. So when I weighed all these options I thought, no, I have to go because I still hold the ambition of furthering my education someday, especially

once your mind is made up that you would like to become an academic (Former Lecturer - B8).

The above quote was a voice of a young academic who felt there was no hope of progressing his career without having to quit the university. Although committed to the profession he felt that his career aspiration would be better served elsewhere.

6.4 Factors that influence application of talent management ideas

When it came to TM ideas participants appeared to focus on talent development, particularly further long term training leading to masters or PhD degrees. This focus was based on the fact that most academics in the university were MA degree holders and harboured ambitions of studying for their PhDs. The factors below relate more with talent development than other TM ideas.

6.4.1 Policy-practice dissonance

Having recognised that further training opportunities attracted most people that joined academia and that the lack of such opportunities contributed towards failure to retain, it was claimed that the university had introduced a policy aimed at supporting talent development. However, financial constraints made it practically impossible to implement such policies and ideas. One academic acknowledged this and pointed out that:

Currently the university has put in place a policy saying that if people want to go for further studies the university can support them financially but I haven't seen anybody being supported so I don't know about that [policy implementation] (Senior Lecturer - B4).

Indeed having a policy in place is one thing and implementing it is yet another. The most important thing is if the policy is implemented. The university's registrar agreed with the above observation and confirmed that the university's willingness to support implementation of what it preached in policy changes was hampered by lack of resources. As a result, it seemed all the university could do was to "*encourage*":

We would as much as possible love to have all our staff members upgraded but as a university we are constrained most of the times in

terms of resources. Those that do not have higher qualifications we at least encourage them to attain higher qualifications (Registrar - B10).

Certainly most participants drew attention to the links between implementation failure and financing. As I will explain in the section on financing below, participants seemed empathetic to the university's circumstances.

6.4.2 Financing

Financing was considered the main factor influencing application of TM ideas. Specifically lack of financial resources to support staff that required further development through long term or external training was widely acknowledged, understandably so because the majority of academics did not have PhD degrees. In a few cases where participants talked about external conferences and workshops as aspects of TM practices, lack of financial support from the institution meant that academics were not as exposed as they ought to be and missed out on the benefits of such mobility, especially when one considered mobility as academic practice. Citing finances as a huge challenge one faculty dean indicated that:

The excuse is that we are still young and we do not have the resources to meet staff developmental needs. For example we can't pay staff while on study leave (Dean of Faculty – B1)

Or that:

External short courses are more difficult because in the end it comes down to what extent you can finance even getting there in the absence of any external scholarships or sponsorship (Professor - B9)

That the university was still young and developing was without a doubt and its reliance on student fees alone had been an age old song used to justify why the university could not afford to implement certain initiatives. It was "*the story that is used to be told again and again*" (Former Lecturer - B8) and surely the strategy appeared to have worked in drawing staff members' attention to the plight of the university, leading some participants to express empathy towards the university:

Being a private university *we understand them* (emphasis mine).
They don't get money from anywhere else apart from student tuition

fees. There are no donors and even the church doesn't support the university (Former Lecturer - B8)

And by the same token some participants were more understanding of the logic behind the practice that people going for further studies needed not be paid if they were not rendering any service to the university, reinforcing the university's approach of buying rather than developing talent:

If you go for further studies consider yourself unemployed because they cannot support you when you are away, when you are not offering your services to the university. Remember it's a private university and they say their coffers are always dry (Former Senior Lecturer - B7)

Although some participants appeared more understanding such empathy did not stop them from seeking other opportunities. As it has been shown elsewhere in this chapter, talent flight was commonplace, reinforcing the '*training ground*' metaphor that people went there to acquire experience for jobs in better-resourced public universities.

6.4.3 Institutional structure

Institutional structure, particularly the absence of a dedicated human resource (HR) function, had an influence on TM practices. In this particular case the HR function was under the office of the registrar. However, because of concentration of power at the top where, according to one lecturer (B2) "*everything goes to the vice chancellor and it becomes too heavy for him*", HR issues did not get the attention they deserved. The participant contrasted the university with organisations he had been to before, noting that there was confusion in the university on who dealt with HR issues.

6.5 The future of talent management: Capabilities to compete for talent.

The university's capabilities to compete for talent in future were not promising. There was pessimism on account of its circumstances. Classified as "*a training ground for other universities*" in the country by participants, it was unconceivable to talk about its competitiveness in the global academic labour market. Participants,

while conceding that the university could not compete with public universities because they were well supported by government, suggested splitting the academic labour market into public and private sectors. This reaffirmed the idea that public universities were the destination of choice by most academics. In spite of such segregation of public and private universities, there were still mixed reactions regarding its competitiveness within the religious/private universities classification.

6.6 Conclusion, summary and case contribution to the thesis

The chapter explored how a religious university defined, identified, developed and the extent to which it retained talent. Conceptualised as exclusive and in terms of qualifications, context and relevance to the organisation, tournaments and headhunting were the two ways of identifying talents. People were recruited on three year rolling contracts. Talents expressed dissatisfaction on lack of support from the university on development, particularly considering that the majority of academics did not have PhD degree. Among the factors that influenced application of TM ideas, financing was being singled out as the most critical one, affecting recruitment, development and retention. Table 4 below provides a summary of findings from this case.

Table 4 Summary of Case B's findings

S#	Themes	Summary of findings
1.	Conceptualisation of talent	<p>Exclusive (academics) and contextual, focusing on qualifications, high potential and value to the organisation.</p> <p>Rare and difficult to find or recruit and performs beyond the required minimum performance level.</p>
2.	Talent identification and recruitment	<p>Competitive 'tournaments' and personal recommendation used flexibly depending on need and talent pool.</p> <p>Initial entry level recruitment focuses on knowledge mastery and qualifications</p> <p>Recruitment mainly on 3 year rolling contracts (unlimited number of renewals) subject to performance. Zero-hour contracts were also in use.</p> <p>Unwritten preference for older people for strategic and practical reasons</p>
3.	Talent development	<p>Talent buying strategy kept institutional support on personal development to a minimum level possible.</p> <p>Supported internal short term courses, workshops and seminars.</p>
4.	Talent retention	<p>Poor retention of young, developing academic talent due to lack of opportunities for personal development, poor remuneration, work conditions and environment: 'Training ground' metaphor described individuals who joined the university to gain experience before applying for positions at desired universities.</p> <p>Stayers: moonlighting opportunities, commitment, lack of ambition. 'Retirement home' metaphor described retention of older academics (those who retired elsewhere) who no longer had ambition for personal development and lacked the drive to fight for better work conditions.</p>
5.	Factors that facilitate or constrain application of TM practices	<p>Leadership: democratization of position of Dean of Faculty (election) and appointment (by top management) of Heads of Department. Concentration of power at the top rendered heads and deans weak. Lack of leadership capacity and absence of a HR function bred confusion TM responsibility.</p> <p>Policy-practice dissonance: good conditions and policies on paper that were not implemented.</p> <p>Financing and institutional ownership: single source financing (tuition) not sufficient to implement TM practices.</p> <p>Lack of employee voice: Dominant 'managerial' logics frustrated efforts by academics to form a union.</p>
6.	Capabilities to compete for talent	<p>The university stood no chance of competing for talent beyond national borders. At national level it could only compete with those in the private or religious sectors.</p>

This university was an interesting case given its history in the provision of education generally and the quality associated with its establishments at the lower levels of education. Furthermore, as a church-owned university it was important to examine how its position in society influenced its approach to talent management. The expectation was that being a church-owned university it was driven by logics that lie somewhere between collegiality and business/commercial interests. As stated in the context chapter (chapter 3) many of the religious universities are more concerned with character building and promoting religious values than money. As a case, this university provides further platform for examining the role of institutional logics in the adoption of TM practices.

Chapter 7 . Case C

This chapter presents findings on how a private university conceptualised, identified, developed and retained talent. It further highlights factors that influenced application of TM practices and perceptions regarding the university's prospects to compete for talent. Having looked at TM from public and religious university perspectives in chapters five and six respectively, the present chapter is the final of three chapters that provide the foundation for the understanding of the influence of university ownership on talent management. In conformity with the arrangement of the preceding two chapters, the first part deals with the question of conceptualisation, the second interrogates how talent was identified, developed and retained, followed by a look at factors that influenced application of talent management practices and the future of TM. The last section concludes the chapter.

7.1 Case overview

Case C was a private university. Similar to case B in chapter 6, it was accredited by government through the NCHE. One of the owners was its chancellor who was also responsible for overseeing the university's day-to-day running. Faculties and departments were headed by deans and heads respectively who were appointed by the owner.

The university's enrolment stood at slightly over 1000 undergraduate students. Of the 53 academics employed by the university, only 6 (11percent) had PhDs. Eighteen (34 percent) had master's degree qualifications and 29 (55 percent) had an undergraduate degree qualification. The university's HRM&D function was managed by non-specialized HR officers.

7.2 Conceptualisation of talent

Participants' understanding of talent appeared to emphasise skills, attitudes and qualifications. These were linked to the university's core business of teaching. Although research and consulting were stated as core, this was rather an aspiration than practice because, in reality, teaching remained the major preoccupation. In spite of such being the case, participants' understanding of talent incorporated what was

generally conceived as academic work. One head of department defined talent in the following terms:

The ability to demonstrate skill in management, lecture delivery, supervision, publishing, and organizing university events professionally and with integrity (Head of Department - C1).

The above participant drew on roles that academic staff members ordinarily play in a university. Talent implied someone with the required level of knowledge and commitment that benefitted the university to the extent that the university would want to keep that person. When it came to *'those you always want to keep'*, qualifications played a big part and were emphasized at entry level as recalled by the participant below:

Of course the major factor in defining talent is qualification. At one point I sat on panel when they were recruiting a member in my department. When we were looking at the CVs I was told that priority goes to those people who have got a master's degree. That's when I knew that qualifications count (Senior Lecturer - C7).

The emphasis on qualifications was in line the university's talent buying strategy. By adopting such a strategy the university sent a clear message that qualifications sell and that it would strive to recruit individuals who already possessed the requisite qualifications to teach, although existing competition for academic talent meant that the university ended up recruiting first degree holders for staff associate/junior lecturer positions. By implication the policy also signalled the university's reluctance to commit to long term training of its teaching staff. Some participants acknowledge that the chancellor and members of the management team encouraged staff, particularly those with first degrees, to go for further studies. As suggested by the above senior lecturer (C7), whenever possible recruitment targeted those with master's degree and above because such were presumed to have *"the necessary competent level to perform the university's core function of teaching"* (Associate Lecture -C2) or were technically qualified to teach (World Bank, 2010).

In conceptualizing talent, participants placed varying degrees of emphasis on *"professionalism and specialisation"* (Staff Welfare Committee Leader - C9), *"performance and assignment of different leadership roles within the institution"*

(Lecturer - C6), and “*rare skills, passion, dedication and authority in one’s academic field*” (Associate Lecturer - C2). It is important to note that the theme of “talent visibility” run through participants’ definition of talent when they talked about *ability to demonstrate* or *opportunity to showcase talent* through the provision of a platform to employees. Another theme that dominated participants’ conceptualisation of talent was its exclusive nature.

The exclusive conceptualisation of talent recognised and acknowledged that some individuals contributed greater value to the university than others. Although there was an understanding that not all academics would be considered talent just as not all non-academics would be classified as non-talent, the conceptualisation of talent seemed to favour academics by virtue of the core role they were playing in the university. To underscore the exclusive conceptualisation within academic talent one faculty dean emphasised the point that:

Some [academics] are better than others. As dean I give an assignment to somebody I believe has the talent to do it because with others you don’t know if it will be done. So yes there are differences among academic staff. Some are talented while others are not (Dean of Faculty - C5).

Although the exclusive conceptualisation appeared to be applicable to both academics and non-academics the challenge facing the latter was that they lacked space or platform to showcase their talent because they were overshadowed by academics. It was a view summed up by one participant who indicated that:

Talent is supposed to be both groups, support staff and academic staff, only that most of the times support staff is overshadowed by the academic staff. The presence of support staff is not highlighted and they are not even given a chance for their talent to come out (Lecturer - C6).

The above view drew attention to the fact that although participants acknowledged existence of talent across the board it was easier for some categories of staff to be visible than others. In this instance, academic members held a privileged position in so far as talent visibility was concerned because they were performing the

university's core function. They were the ones making the biggest contribution to the university's reputation.

The above notwithstanding participants indicated lack of consensus at university level on the conceptualisation of talent. How they defined and conceptualised talent was a result of their personal understanding and not an outcome of a shared meaning across the organisation. By implication, individuals were left to speculate as to what the university considered talent, leading to doubts on the institution's ability to treat talent accordingly. The general feeling was that what got noticed and rewarded was loyalty represented by length of service regardless of other aspects such as individuals' unique attributes that would constitute talent. Summing up the lack of consensus on the conceptualisation of talent at university level, the participant below stated that:

I don't know if there is an understanding of talent at all. Somehow there is a blind eye that is given to the aspect of talent. Talent calls for recognition that there is talent and therefore there is need to strategically plan on its utilization. In that regard this university doesn't have that understanding, that recognition in order to identify talent in different people and utilize it. What you see is the management attitude that we are already employees and that whatever we do is simply part of our normal duties, nothing unique (Lecturer - C6).

The above remarks raise some key issues within TM: planning and deployment of talent. Without a shared understanding of talent it becomes difficult for leaders at different levels of the organisation to plan for talent and to utilize the existing talent.

7.3 Talent identification, development and retention

7.3.1 Talent identification and recruitment

Two main methods were used by the university to identify and recruit qualified talent. The common way was tournaments, where positions were advertised and applicants competed during interviews. Occasionally, departmental heads or the chancellor would use personal recommendation. In some instances the chancellor used discretionary powers to recruit without the formal interview process. The

university had greater leeway, compared to the other two cases presented in chapters 5 and 6, regarding identification and recruitment of talent. This section explains how tournaments and personal recommendations were used to identify talent and the terms on which talents were recruited.

With tournaments, applicants competed for positions following their response to advertisements. A panel was constituted to shortlist and interview applicants. Following the panel's recommendation the owner/chancellor appointed the successful candidate(s). The chancellor held veto power over the committee's decisions and recommendations. One dean of faculty recounted how identification and recruitment were conducted:

Some people are handpicked by the chancellor, that's one way. The other one is that we do run interviews. We advertise and people apply. We hold interviews and I chair some of those. After interviewing we rank the candidates and submit to the chancellor who does the appointing (Dean of Faculty - C5).

The above participant acknowledged the chancellor's authority on recruitment decisions. Clearly the owner/chancellor had the final say on recruitment. His decisions superseded those of committees or panels. In one incident the chancellor overruled an interview panel's decision, using his veto power to appoint a candidate outside a panel's recommendation:

When three weeks elapsed without getting results after attending interviews I was called to meet chancellor who informed me that the panel wanted to pick a non-Malawian and that he wanted to change his focus and employ more locals. That's why he made me a job offer (Lecturer - C6).

The above is an instance of the owner's vision coming out clearly. The interview panel might have not even been aware of this shift in focus as it appeared that the owner did not inform the panel of the change, after all, as one faculty dean emphasized, "*it is his university*". As a privately owned university the general feeling among employees was that they were at the mercy of the owners and such feelings prevented them from openly questioning practices that were deemed unfair. This was exacerbated by the lack of platform for employee voice in the form of a

union, just as was the case with the religious university in chapter six. The existing staff welfare committee lacked a solid legal stand to engage with management on issues of conditions of service. As a private entity, it remained the discretion of the owners to be transparent or not regarding TM practices. The other means of identifying talent was personal recommendation, a method that provided a lot of leeway and use of discretionary power.

With regards to this method, heads of department were occasionally involved and used their personal networks to look for potential academic talent. One participant who was employed through this method recalled what happened in her case:

A head of department from this university contacted a head of department at another university where I was still an undergraduate student asking for final year students who had the potential to graduate with high scores. I only sent a CV and was offered a job without interviews. (Associate Lecturer - C8)

The participant further indicated that she later had to provide an academic transcript for verification of her grades. In cases where the head of department was not involved the chancellor took charge of the process and used his discretion, oftentimes relying on his broad social capital or networks to either provide or recommend candidates. He would then simply handpick a candidate of choice. This was what happened to one participant, the chancellor's old acquaintance, who stated that:

I didn't apply, I talked to the owner because he was my colleague in college. We were actually classmates. So when we met at his school here he asked if I had retired and then said, you can come and join us here, no problem (Senior Lecturer - C3).

Use of social capital or networks in recruitment (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012) and personal recommendation was certainly relied upon during the university's formative years. As a new privately owned university it was difficult to attract talent nationally because people had doubts over its sustainability. For that reason the bulk of academic staff were non-Malawian. There was a big proportion of Zimbabweans who, at the time, were fleeing the economic challenges facing their country. The Zimbabwe economic crisis made it easier for the university to recruit externally. The

crisis did not only benefit this private university. It was common to find Zimbabwean nationals across the country's university sector. In this particular case, however, the search for talent beyond the borders was a forced strategy having failed to attract local talent. The poor response from the locals was much to do with their perception of a privately-owned university, given a very short history of private ownership of universities. In contrast, public universities generally got overwhelming response to their advertisements for positions.

Occasionally, personal recommendation was provided by those that were leaving the university who were requested to identify potential replacements. An example was provided by a participant who indicated that:

When [Dr X] was leaving he was told to find someone who could replace him. He identified someone who never reported because he had a better offer somewhere. Then [Dr X] asked me if I was willing to take up the offer which I grasped with both hands (Staff Welfare Committee Leader - C9).

This was not an isolated case. There were varied experiences of how different academics joined the university. Using a range of talent identification methods from formal interviews that took the form of tournaments to headhunting by heads of department or the chancellor/owner to personal recommendation showed greater flexibility in practices. In all these instances, however, the chancellor had the final say on decisions. All participants indicated to have met the chancellor prior to their job offers which were on four-year rolling contracts.

These rolling contracts were renewable based on unlimited terms. They were offered in an environment of open multiple employment policy such that academics were allowed to hold other appointments elsewhere, provided that they delivered on their teaching obligations with the university. One participant who quit to join a public university claimed that his continued engagement with the university was on a part-time basis. However, the university's staff return listed him alongside all other academics as full-time employees regardless of holding full-time employment elsewhere. This kind of staff listing by the university was not surprising given its open policy on multiple employment. Another participant who held a full time job in government summed it clearly below:

For a lot of us this university is not the only job. Here we treat it as part-time. You come here during your free time and teach as long as you are not in conflict with your other boss. The other boss doesn't know what you do with your free time. Actually when I was employed here I was told that we don't mind you working somewhere as long as you deliver (Senior Lecturer - C7).

Such contractual arrangements have ramifications for organisational commitment. While contracts can be renewed multiple times it may not translate to greater commitment on the part of employees compared to that offered by tenure which is the dominant mode in public universities and other sectors. Furthermore, such contract arrangements failed to offer much security as there were no guarantees of renewal at the expiry of each contract.

7.3.2 Talent development

Participants recognised that talent development took a number of forms including induction, refresher courses, opportunities for mentorship, publishing and training for higher degrees. However, participants bemoaned the lack of financial support from the university. The situation started showing signs of slight changes. Some of them acknowledged the university's effort since it begun providing assistance in the form of zero-interest loans (salary advance payments) which were recovered over an agreed period of time. This section examines the extent to which talent development initiatives were implemented, focussing on induction, refresher courses and long term training.

Induction was provided to individuals at the time of entry into the organisation as a form of socialization while refresher courses or workshops were meant to improve teaching and assessment and were offered periodically to organisational members. Whereas induction was usually conducted by the chancellor, deans of faculty or departmental heads, the refresher courses were done through peer training as explained by one faculty dean below:

Once in a while we do have workshops where we do peer training. Those staff members that are knowledgeable in their areas but are not necessarily teachers by profession undergo 2-3 day peer training workshops to prepare them for teaching. Those that have gone

through formal teacher training are the ones facilitating these workshops (Dean of Faculty - C5).

The content of such workshops included development of modules, teaching styles and techniques, lesson planning, formulation of examinations, and student assessment. The understanding from both academics and management was that most of them had degree qualifications that might not have prepared them for teaching. Conducting these workshops in-house circumvented the need to spend money and time on a year-long programme that would lead to University Certificate of Education (UCE) offered at other institutions.

In other instances the focus was on academic writing. This initiative used external facilitators who had experience in academic writing and publishing. It was meant to equip and encourage staff to fulfil the university's other objective of research. Where internally published journals existed, such as the one launched by the university around the time of this study's data collection, staff were encouraged to publish in order to improve their visibility within and beyond but also to enhance their career progression. Just as in other universities, research and publication were considered key components of one's promotion although this university did not strictly use publications. Induction and internal workshops were relatively less expensive to run compared to long term training.

Of all the talent development initiatives, long-term training leading to a higher degree was considered the most important by participants. Similar to the other cases in chapters 5 and 6, this was not surprising because most participants were yet to acquire the highest academic qualification possible. In spite of this need, it appeared that either the university had no capacity or lacked incentive to spend on academics' long-term training or both. All the university did was to encourage academics, particularly those with a first degree who were not technically qualified to teach at university level, to pursue higher degree studies:

The university has been encouraging members of staff especially those without a master's degree to pursue master's degree. So in that sense the university does encourage lecturers to go for further studies (Lecturer - C6).

The participant above emphasized the word ‘*encourage*’ in recognition of the fact that although the university offered flexible teaching arrangements for those attending training locally, or indeed for those working elsewhere, it did not meet the cost of such training. At best the university made advance salary payments on request. The salary advance was to be paid back at zero interest and over a number of months agreed between the staff member and the university. The aforementioned flexibility allowed those on long term training locally to rearrange their teaching schedules to allow them time for both their studies and teaching obligations. In cases where individuals found it impossible or difficult to continue teaching while on training they were faced with the difficult decision of taking unpaid leave. Unpaid leave or outright resignation were the only options for those wishing to study abroad. As expected those that were pursuing further studies were doing so locally within a distance that afforded them time to continue teaching. There appeared to be a general understanding at the lack of financing towards training among participants who seemed to understand the low degree of financial leeway (Boon et al., 2009) expected of a private university that relied on tuition fees for its operations:

But I think that being a private institution they are trying their best because I wouldn’t expect a private institution to send me to school and pay for my school fees (Senior Lecturer - C7)

This could be the expectation because people were socialised to be more understanding of the financial constraints that universities which relied solely on tuition, compared to public universities that got government funding, faced. The university’s pursuit of a talent buying strategy and offering contracts that did not threaten the institution’s profitability and financial viability (Boxall and Purcell, 2016) fit in the specific institutional profile and did not seem to surprise participants who seemed to empathise with the university.

7.3.3 Talent retention

Successful organisations are those that are able to retain their key people. For this reason talent retention is one of the main preoccupation of people practitioners in organisations. A commonly held view among participants in this university was that there was little, if any, effort on retention of talent. This view was metaphorically expressed by participants who described the university as ‘*training ground*’ and

'retirement home'. These metaphors were also common in the religious university presented in chapter 6. By examining these metaphors closely this section sheds light on why it was extremely challenging for private universities to retain academic talent.

The 'training ground' metaphor expressed the idea that people would join the university with one thought in mind: gaining the experience to join a more prestigious university later. This was particularly true for fresh, first degree holders who comprised the bulk of academics in young, private universities. It was a metaphor used to capture the kind of challenges that the university faced on talent retention. One participant, who claimed to have quit the university in favour of a public one, although she still held a position with the private university, exemplified the mind-set implied in the metaphor when she said that:

First of all I should say it was easy because joining a [public university] was already my desire, this was only a training ground. I always wanted to work for a [public university] and the only way I would do that was to get experience and use it when applying for a post in a [public university] (Associate Lecturer - C8)

As a young academic she certainly represented the views of her contemporaries who, despite lack of opportunities for personal growth and development, remained with the university waiting for better opportunities elsewhere. As stated earlier, the university was too financially constrained to fully support costly long term training. This reinforced the idea that individuals did not have to commit to the long term since the organisation did not invest in their development. This feeling was further heightened by a sense of lack of security particularly among the younger academics. Ironical as it were in relation to the metaphor, working for the university still afforded the platform for training and acquisition of experience. Those that wished to attend long term training did so, using their resources and the flexible arrangements that the university provided. After gaining experience or obtaining a master's degree through own effort a quitting decision was easy to reach. In case of those that self-funded further studies their intention upon completion was clear as the participant below, in the final stages of a master's degree programme, shared his vision:

I know that after I finish my MA I will start looking elsewhere. If someone is willing to give me more than they are giving me now I will not think twice because I am paying for my studies (Lecturer - C6).

The experience gained from the younger and less prestigious universities was then used to seek academic jobs with public universities which were highly regarded. In addition to seeking other employment, the common perception was that holding a teaching position improved one's chances of securing admission into a master's degree programme at other universities.

The 'retirement home' metaphor represented a category of people that the university was likely to retain: those that had retired elsewhere. It represented the other extreme end of the demographic composition of staff at the university. As compared to the younger academics, the old ones were perceived as less demanding and therefore easier to manage. Their main interest was to earn a modest income to supplement what they got from their retirement benefits and they had no desire for further training. For the university, older academics were a cheaper option and easier to retain. Obviously, having reached retirement age it would be difficult for them to get employment elsewhere. One younger participant, having left the university herself, expressed her feelings towards the older academics thus:

Sometimes I feel that some people are still with the university because they are old, yeah. Maybe they feel that they would not be able to find another job if they left this university. After all it is their retirement home (Associate Lecturer - C8)

One of the retirees, however, expressed a different, positive perspective to his continued participation in paid work at the university. Focussing on the health benefits of maintaining an active work life he believed that:

One of the good things is that when you are doing some work you become a bit healthier as opposed to simply staying at home. Just imagine I retired five or six years ago and I am still going strong (Senior Lecturer - C3)

The participant pointed out the benefits of remaining active and the idea of looking forward to something every day. Clearly older academics like him derived

contentment easily from their work and tended to be less mobile than their younger counterparts. Further explanation to the state of academic talent retention at the university hinged on 'flexibility', lack of job security and insufficient opportunities for personal development.

Flexibility in this context represented the university's lack of close monitoring of academics and giving academics liberty around timetabling. Coupled with the university's condition that allowed academics to hold employment elsewhere, most participants found no justification for quitting since they had time for personal things including having full time employment elsewhere. A faculty dean summed up the retention benefits of flexibility when he said that:

I would say retention is good. We do retain a high number of staff that we recruit. One important reason for this is the university's flexibility on double employment. If I get a job elsewhere they will say go ahead, just make sure that you teach your classes here. I think this has helped keep a large number of our staff because they are not in the 'either or' situation. They can get both. As a result many of our staff have got jobs elsewhere (Dean of Faculty - C5).

This participant raised two important characteristics of the university. The first was the affirmation that salary levels were not competitive forcing academics to engage in moonlighting activities. The existing flexibility ensured that academics had little or no incentive to quit in search of higher salaries. The second characteristic was that the university was less controlling over its academics. It allowed flexible timetabling to afford academics time for their engagements outside the university. This further reinforced the status of the university as a teaching university despite launching an in-house journal to promote research and publication. This also partly explains why academic talent was largely defined in terms of teaching and commitment or dedication to teaching one's classes.

Being a private university, as contrasted with public universities and religious universities, it was run on the benevolence of the owner(s). This sentiment did not escape participants and it fuelled a sense of insecurity. In spite of the benefits of such ownership structure some participants were hesitant to commit to the university in the long term. The ownership structure coupled with the prevailing employment

conditions did not provide the job security that employees looked for, such as that provided by tenured employment. One participant recalled his feelings when he had just joined the university:

When I was starting I was having fears that can't this guy just decide to close shop and walk away or maybe wake up with a bad mood and says you are fired, you know? (Associate Lecturer - C2).

It seemed that when people joined the university their fear, real or imagined, would drive them to remain on the hunt for another job that promised a greater sense of security. In such cases the value of tenure, one of the features of public universities, could not be ignored. Although contracts could be renewed the idea that its renewal was not automatic kept people on the edge, and some expressed willingness to accept a job elsewhere that paid a little less than their present employer in search of greater sense of job security.

7.4 Factors influencing application of talent management ideas and practices

Two key facilitating or constraining factors were observed as being responsible for the state of talent management in the university. They were financial resources and HR capacity. HR capacity was encased in underdeveloped institutional structures or policy. This section looks at each of these factors in turn.

Financial resources were cited as the main factor limiting application of TM ideas and practices. For example it has been explained under talent development above that further training was highly valued by staff because they were not fully qualified for academic positions yet the university could not afford to fund their training. The existing loan or salary advance arrangements limited staff in terms of where they could go for training since they needed to continue working while studying in order to continue earning a salary. Addressing the issue of financing as a major influence, one participant said that:

The finance part is the main limiting factor. The university being private doesn't have that much money yet so they will simply facilitate (Senior Lecturer - C3).

The facilitation being talked about above was the provision of loans or salary advances and retaining the person on the payroll as long as they maintained their teaching responsibilities. Such arrangements implied that staff were financing their own further training. As a consequence the university had no influence in the event that such people decided to take their labour elsewhere upon completion of their training. The other form of facilitation being implied by the participant was the idea that staff in such situations had the liberty to change their timetables to suit their schedules.

In addition to failure to support long term training, the low degree of financial leeway meant that the university could not support other talent management practices that were typical of the academy such as supporting academics to attend conferences. Other aspects such as mentorship were also affected because the university failed to attract highly qualified and experienced academic talent who would in turn act as mentors.

In terms of capacity, the university implemented refresher courses through peer-training or, on a few occasions, use of external facilitators. These focused on teaching and academic writing. An equally important impediment to application of talent management practices was lack of HR capacity. Although peer-training was conducted, there was a limited number of staff qualified to facilitate such training sessions. Additionally long term training for higher degrees had been such a major concern because the university did not have postgraduate programmes due to capacity issues since most of the academic staff were in need of further training themselves. Any proposals to run postgraduate programmes were very unlikely to be approved by the NCHE due to lack of capacity to run such programmes. Even if it were possible, it would be extremely difficult to cover all areas requiring such training. This was also the case even in long established and better financed universities nationally which had to rely on external providers in most disciplines. The university therefore remained a teaching university of undergraduate programmes. This exacerbated the financing challenge since those who wanted further training had to go to other universities.

In terms of institutional structures, as a young university most of its structures were still being developed. There was a clear gap as shown by the absence of a HRM office:

Now when it comes to issues of placement or who to employ and other talent issues we have not been organised because the university does not have a HR person okay and I don't think they have an HR strategy (Lecturer - C6).

The existing decision making structures where some academics were involved in adhoc decision making committees answerable to management were deemed insufficient to address existing TM challenges. In any case such structures had low level authority since the chancellor had veto powers over any decision brought to him. As a result, offices such that that of registrar were reduced to figure-head status. Such concentration of power at the top combined with lack of relevant structures and offices created an environment where talent failed to flourish. It would be difficult for the university to benefit from academic and leadership talent inherent in its members of staff unless the owner deemed it necessary. Furthermore, lack of a clearly communicated strategy and the policy vacuum created by such lack of clarity, meant that there was no platform on which to input TM ideas and practices.

7.5 The future of talent management: Capabilities to compete for talent

The university's capabilities to compete for talent were affected by a number of factors. At best the university was restrained in what it could do to attract and retain the best because of limited financing which in turn affected its competitiveness. Its age and status added to the complexity of its relatively low prestige compared to the more established universities. For instance, its image as training ground and retirement home did not inspire confidence with regards to its competitiveness on talent. Drawing attention to the "training ground" and "retirement home" metaphors, participants felt that the university would continue with the trend of attracting only fresh graduates who had first degrees and those that had retired elsewhere. The consequence of such a demographic composition was that on one hand the fresh graduates had low organisational commitment and on the other hand the retirees were happy to do just the minimum to remain employed.

Recognising its low status within the general institutional environment some participants opted to ignore pressure from other sectoral players based on age and

status. As a young private university the temptation to ignore other players was high. As the participant below suggested, there was need to distinguish the different players in the labour market:

I wouldn't just distinguish between public and private universities. I would also add another dimension. The other universities that are founded by churches would also be misleading because they get a bit of subvention from their own churches. So it would be unfair to compare ourselves with them. But among the purely private ones, in that category, I would rate this university highly (Staff Welfare Committee Leader - C9)

The above quote presents an idea that the university should not be considered on an equal footing with public and religious universities because the others were financially better off owing to their other sources of revenue. In addition to the fees public universities got government funding and there was a perception that religious universities got financial support from their parent churches. There was a widely held view that universities in the country were stratified based on their financing mechanisms and funding levels which in turn afforded them different degrees of financial leeway in terms of what practices they could implement and the level of salaries on offer. In combination with reputation built over years of existence some universities were better placed to compete for talent than others.

In terms of pay, the university's failure to match or get closer to pay levels and conditions of service that existed in the public university sector led to doubts over its capabilities to compete for the best. Public universities were perceived as the desired destination for those who aspired a career in academia. Most of those who quit private and religious universities did so in order to join public universities. By implication, part of the strategy to compete favourably for the best talent would then be to offer pay and conditions of service at market value. However, any discussion on pay and conditions with reference to what existed in the labour market was curtailed by the owners who claimed to operate based on own logics:

When you bring to their attention that university A is doing XYZ, they say no, this is not university A, we do things our own way (Lecturer - C6).

The idea of not modelling itself on the practices of the established universities was premised on being a “*young university which is still trying to grow*” (Head of Department - C1). As it has been explained above this provided justification for resisting mimetic pressure (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). The above notwithstanding, the university was the only one of the three cases that was open to its academic talent working in multiple sites for financial reasons. Such flexibility and openness had the potential to attract academic talent for zero contract/part-time roles while working elsewhere, an arrangement that fits in the university’s mode of controlling talent flow (Boxall and Purcell, 2016). For a university that is entirely focused on teaching its major worry for the future is on quality of teachers available in the labour market willing to work at multiple sites.

It was apparent that as long as conditions remained the same the university’s capabilities to compete for talent with the so called ‘big players’ remained questionable. Public universities had a history, reputation, finances, and conditions to dominate the national academic labour market on talent. The absence of a formal national ranking of universities was of little consequence in this argument because people were already used to a market that stratified universities based on the above mentioned characteristics, including the ability to attract the best students. Since it takes time and resources to build a reputation and attract the best what came out clearly from members of this university was that it would remain less competitive.

7.6 Conclusion, summary and case contribution to the thesis

Through this chapter, the thesis has explored how a private university defined, identified, developed and retained talent. It has also assessed the university’s capabilities to compete for talent. In the absence of a shared understanding of talent across the university participants’ views reflected an exclusive conceptualisation of talent such that talent could be found across the different staff categories. Identification of talents was flexible and ranged from tournaments to personal recommendation where interview panels, departmental heads and the university’s owners were all involved to varying degrees. Talent development was limited and

retention was weak because the university was still young and less competitive.

Table 5 below is a summary of findings.

Table 5 Summary of Case C's findings

S#	Themes	Summary of findings
1.	Conceptualisation of talent	<p>Exclusive across staff categories, focusing on qualifications, skills and attitudes.</p> <p>Visibility: institution's role to provide platform for demonstrating/showcasing talent. Academics held a more privileged position on visibility than non-academics.</p>
2.	Talent identification and recruitment	<p>Competitive 'tournaments', personal recommendation and handpicking (by the Chancellor) used with a lot of flexibility/leeway.</p> <p>Recruitment on 4 year rolling contracts (unlimited number of renewals) subject to performance. Open policy on staff holding positions with other organisations.</p>
3.	Talent development	<p>Talent buying strategy entailed that the university did not financially support long term training for staff.</p> <p>Periodic refresher courses and workshops to improve teaching, assessment, research and academic writing.</p>
4.	Talent retention	<p>Poor retention of young, developing academic talent due to lack of opportunities for personal development, poor remuneration, work conditions and environment: 'Training ground' metaphor described individuals who joined the university to gain experience before applying for positions at desired universities.</p> <p>Insecurity: feelings of being at the mercy of the individual(s) who owned the university.</p> <p>Stayers: open policy on double/multiple employment, commitment and lack of ambition in older academics: 'Retirement home' metaphor describes retention of older academics (those who retired elsewhere) who no longer have ambition for personal development and rate their chances of getting a job elsewhere very lowly.</p>
5.	Factors that facilitate or constrain application of TM practices	<p>Leadership: power concentrated at the top – a powerful owner ('it is his university'), weak leadership at departmental and faculty levels (lack decision making powers), and absence of a HR function.</p> <p>Underdeveloped institutional structures or policies characterised by policy vacuum: either policies do not exist or they are not communicated to staff – and staff not usually bothered to find out.</p> <p>Financing and institutional ownership: single source financing (tuition) not sufficient to implement TM practices. Participants were very accommodating of financial constraints due to the university being 'purely private'.</p>
6.	Capabilities to compete for talent	<p>The perception was that it can favourably compete with fellow younger private universities and not the more established public and religious universities.</p>

Operating on business-like logics, the university continued to resist mimetic pressures by opting not to copy some practices of the leading and more successful universities, due to conflict with their logics. The dominance of management at this university implied that top management or the owners were the key actors shaping the institution's dominant logics as well as TM strategies. This was clear from the university's approach to talent recruitment, development and retention. For instance, using flexibility logics and their dominance, the owners or top managers were able to utilize a range of convenient and cheaper recruitment methods, were able to implement an open policy on academics holding multiple positions and implemented conditions that were less costly to the business. In view of the above, this case's contribution to the analysis of the study's broad findings is that it provides a frame of reference of a university that operates purely on business-like logics and where the dominance of management or the owners takes centre stage, and how these in turn affect TM practice. For instance it was clear that the university's unique institutional logics led to open policy on academics holding positions elsewhere without having to resign their position with the university. In the other cases, moonlighting was perceived negatively and in terms of its disruptive force and not as a means employed by the institution to retain talent.

Chapter 8 . Cross case analysis and discussion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a cross-case analysis in order to tease out insights into how an emerging academic labour market conceptualises, identifies, develops and retains talent. The chapter, anchored in institutional theory, institutional logics and the broad talent management and academic labour market literature, provides a richer picture of what might be happening and why. The chapter synthesises observed findings in chapters 5, 6 and 7 with what was discussed in the literature review and context chapters. The chapter answers the specific research questions and offers explanations regarding parallels and differences between and among the three cases under investigation. Answers to the specific research questions are obtained by mobilising knowledge across three cases that are reported in chapters 5, 6 and 7 specifically, as well as the other chapters in general. The knowledge accumulated in the preceding chapters will aid the undertaking of a process of comparison and contrast of cases (Khan and VanWynsberghe, 2008). To aid this process, the table below summarises the key findings presented in the three empirical chapters.

Table 6 Summary of case findings

S#	Themes	Case A: Public University	Case B: Religious University	Case C: Private University
1.	Conceptualisation of talent	<p>Exclusive (academics)/workforce differentiation (academics vs non-academics) – core to the organisation and focuses on qualifications, rare knowledge, skills and experience.</p> <p>Evolving to include a broad range of attributes and other staff categories.</p>	<p>Exclusive (academics) and contextual, focusing on qualifications, high potential and value to the organisation.</p> <p>Rare and difficult to find or recruit and performs beyond the required minimum performance level.</p>	<p>Exclusive across staff categories, focusing on qualifications, skills and attitudes.</p> <p>Visibility: institution's role to provide platform for demonstrating/showcasing talent. Academics hold a more privileged position on visibility than non-academics.</p>
2.	Talent identification and recruitment	<p>Competitive 'tournaments' to align with democratic principles –formal and bureaucratic processes rigidly followed. Focus on knowledge mastery fails to capture full range of talent attributes.</p> <p>Recruitment is mainly on tenure. Short-term and zero-hour contracts also in use.</p>	<p>Competitive 'tournaments' and personal recommendation used flexibly depending on need and talent pool.</p> <p>Initial entry level recruitment focuses on knowledge mastery and qualifications</p> <p>Recruitment mainly on 3 year rolling contracts (unlimited number of renewals) subject to performance. Zero-hour contracts were also in use.</p> <p>Unwritten preference for older people for strategic and practical reasons</p>	<p>Competitive 'tournaments', personal recommendation and handpicking (by the Chancellor) used with a lot of flexibility/leeway.</p> <p>Recruitment is on 4 year rolling contracts (unlimited number of renewals) subject to performance.</p> <p>Open policy on staff holding positions with other organisations.</p>
3.	Talent development	<p>Talent growing strategy that fully supports long term training leading to higher qualifications. Other forms of development: workshops, seminars, short</p>	<p>Talent buying strategy that keeps institutional support on personal development to a minimum level possible.</p>	<p>Talent buying strategy such that the university does not financially support long term training for staff.</p> <p>Periodic refresher courses and workshops to</p>

		courses, conferences and exposure (academic leadership talent).	Supports internal short term courses, workshops and seminars.	improve teaching, assessment, research and academic writing.
4.	Talent retention	<p>Self-retention as the university does not actively engage in a talent retention drive: culture of laxity characterised by ‘post-office-box’ and ‘roof’ metaphors.</p> <p>Stayers: life-long tenure, mobility opportunities, further training opportunities, prestige and patriotism.</p>	<p>Poor retention of young, developing academic talent due to lack of opportunities for personal development, poor remuneration, work conditions and environment: ‘Training ground’ metaphor describes individuals who join the university to gain experience before applying for positions at desired universities.</p> <p>Stayers: moonlighting opportunities, commitment, lack of ambition. ‘Retirement home’ metaphor describes retention of older academics (those who retired elsewhere) who no longer have ambition for personal development and lacks the drive to fight for better work conditions.</p>	<p>Poor retention of young, developing academic talent due to lack of opportunities for personal development, poor remuneration, work conditions and environment: ‘Training ground’ metaphor describes individuals who join the university to gain experience before applying for positions at desired universities.</p> <p>Insecurity: feelings of being at the mercy of the individual(s) who own the university.</p> <p>Stayers: open policy on double/multiple employment, commitment and lack of ambition in older academics: ‘Retirement home’ metaphor describes retention of older academics (those who retired elsewhere) who no longer have ambition for personal development and rate their chances of getting a job elsewhere very lowly.</p>
5.	Factors that facilitate or constrain application of TM practices	Leadership: democratization of positions of Dean of Faculty and Head of Department (election rather than appointment through competitive processes), lack of leadership capacity, leader dependent implementation of TM practices, weak HR function, diffusion of responsibility (existence of multiple points of responsibility leading to	Leadership: democratization of position of Dean of Faculty (election) and appointment (by top management) of Heads of Department. Concentration of power at the top renders these two positions weak. Lack of leadership capacity and absence of a HR function breeds confusion as to who deals with	<p>Leadership: power concentrated at the top – a powerful owner (‘it is his university’), weak leadership at departmental and faculty levels (lack decision making powers), and absence of a HR function.</p> <p>Underdeveloped institutional structures or policies characterised by policy vacuum: either policies do not exist or they are not</p>

		<p>confusion, inaction, lack of commitment or conflict).</p> <p>Policy-practice dissonance: lack of harmony between policy and practice where the university fails to implement stipulated conditions.</p> <p>Financing and institutional ownership: limited finances due to declining government funding and financial leeway regardless of the above limitation. Wider access to scholarship opportunities and opportunities for secondment.</p> <p>Internal resistance: dominant institutional logics based on collegiality traditions drive resistance towards logics that seem to suggest transfer of power to management or leaders.</p>	<p>specific TM issues.</p> <p>Policy-practice dissonance: good conditions and policies on paper that are not implemented.</p> <p>Financing and institutional ownership: single source financing (tuition) not sufficient to implement TM practices.</p> <p>Lack of employee voice: Dominant 'managerial' logics which entail the dominance of management frustrated efforts by academics to form a union which would provide an avenue for voicing TM related concerns.</p>	<p>communicated to staff – and staff are not usually bothered to find out. As a university in infancy, it is still developing its structures.</p> <p>Financing and institutional ownership: single source financing (tuition) not sufficient to implement TM practices. Participants were very accommodating of financial constraints due to the university being 'purely private'.</p>
6.	Capabilities to compete for talent	Nationally competitive and attractive. Internationally uncompetitive as it continues to lose talent to other universities in the region and beyond.	The perception was that the university stood no chance of competing for talent beyond national borders. At national level it could only compete with those in the private or religious sectors.	The perception was that it can favourably compete with fellow younger private universities and not the more established public and religious universities.

The above table highlights and summarizes findings across six broad themes and seeks to ease the process of making sense of the issues within and across cases.

8.2 TM practices vis-à-vis isomorphic pressures

The first two specific research questions sought to understand how universities conceptualized, identified, developed and retained academic talent and the extent to which they adopted similar TM practices. A discussion on these is useful in a number of important ways. Firstly, existing literature suggests that there are ambiguities in conceptualisation of talent and talent management (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Iles et al., 2010a) and that talent is context dependent (Govaerts et al., 2011). It is therefore common for different organisations to conceptualise talent differently. Secondly, and following on from context dependency of talent, it is necessary to examine that context away from multinational organisations and the dominance of western conceptualisations. Finally, in view of the foregoing, it is appropriate to examine institutional theory's proposition that organisations that share the same context tend to be homogenous. This proposition will be examined through talent identification and recruitment, development and retention across the universities.

8.2.1 A multi-dimensional approach to talent conceptualisation

First and foremost it is necessary to discuss how talent was conceptualised in the universities. The observed findings show a multi-dimensional approach to talent (Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen, 2015), both within and across cases. This multi-dimensionality was observed in the range of approaches that were used to conceptualise talent. As can be seen in the summary table (Table 8-1) above, particularly theme 1, qualifications, rare knowledge, skills, experience, a person's contribution or value to the organisation's core function, potential, performance levels, attitudes and visibility were all linked to the conceptualisation of talent. These relate to both object and subject approaches to talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Such was the case in spite of the absence of a unified organisation-wide conceptualisation in the respective universities. Participants' understanding was therefore based on their observations of how their universities dealt with identification, development and retention of [academic] talent. Figure 3 below is a

diagrammatic representation of the multidimensional conceptualisation of talent across the universities.

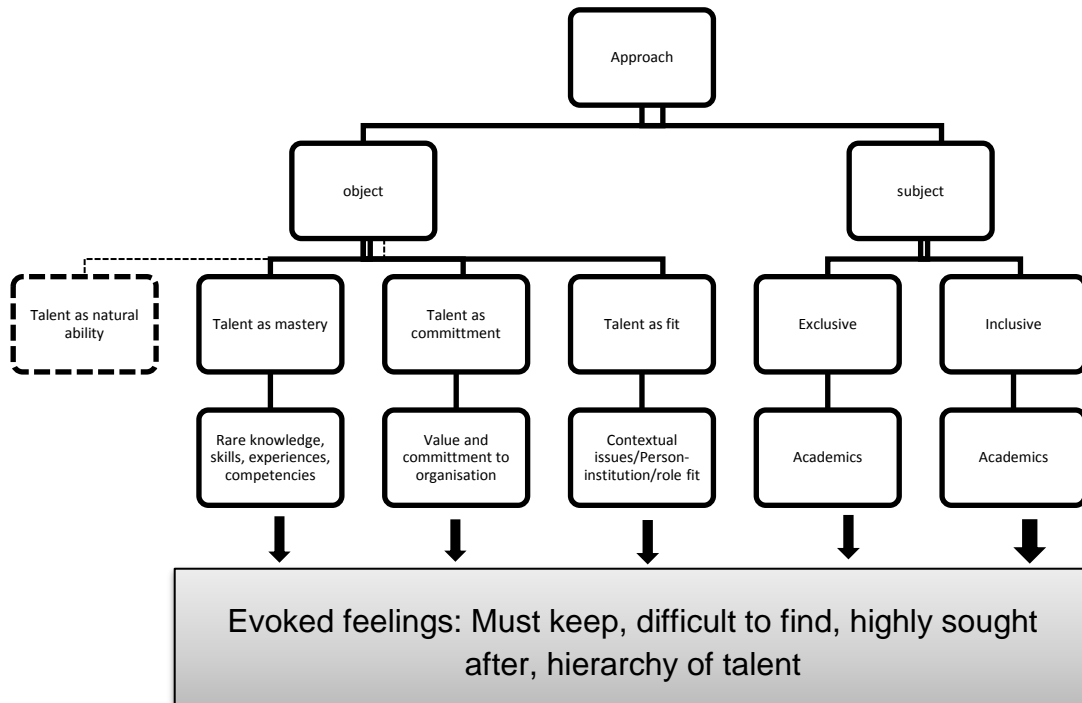


Figure 3 Multidimensional conceptualisation of talent

As the figure shows, the understanding of talent from both the object and subject approaches was that it referred to academics such that any talk of talent evoked feelings of scarcity and a sense of urgency to keep it. In adopting the object approach which places emphasis on characteristics and mastery (Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen, 2015) participants did not consider talent as natural ability, believing talent to be developable (Meyers and Van Woerkom, 2014). When the subject approach was used all three universities defined talent in terms of workforce differentiation (Thunnissen et al., 2013a; Dries, 2013) on the basis of being either academic or non-academic where academics were seen as talent and non-academics were categorised as non-talent. Case C presented a somewhat different understanding of exclusivity in the sense that the exclusive nature applied to both categories of staff, admitting that not all academics were talent just as not all non-academics were non-talent. However, this exception was weakened by the fact that academics were perceived to hold a more privileged position in accessing opportunities for visibility or showcasing their talent than their non-academic

counterparts. Clearly the specific context of these universities and the nature of their core business left non-academics in a precarious position given the fact that conceptualisation affects implementation of TM practices.

The implicit understanding across the universities was that both conceptualisation and implementation of TM practices were framed on the basis of academic talent. It was clear that in practice talent was synonymous with academic talent. Both academic and non-academic participants held similar views that academics/lecturers were the ones to be classified as talent because of their core position. Such views appeared to support the argument that talent is concerned with identifying pivotal positions (Lewis and Heckman, 2006) or the differentiating factor among competitors (Collings, 2015; Festing and Schafer, 2014). As teaching and research institutions, talk of the terms talent or TM elicited thoughts about those who carried out the core functions. In turn, the preoccupation of those in management and leadership positions was the quality of faculty, alongside infrastructure facilities and learning environment, which are considered pillars of any higher education institution (Agrawal, 2010), making recruitment and retention of academic talent key factors for longer-term success and competitiveness of [universities] (Verhaegen, 2005). It needs to be acknowledged that the above views on talent appeared to be influenced by a participant's position within the university structure.

In terms of subject approaches to conceptualisation of talent the findings show that adopting exclusive or inclusive approaches depended on whether one was an academic, a non-academic in managerial ranks, or one holding a combination of academic and managerial roles. On one hand, those that held academic positions tended to view talent in exclusive terms and drew a line between talent and non-talent. To them, academics were a university's talent because of their responsibility to the institution's core business and that it was difficult to get this talent from the labour market compared to those whose roles were limited to administrative and support services. On the other hand, academics in high management positions or other participants whose roles included managing the HR function tended to express talent in inclusive (as in both academics and non-academics) terms, although such expressions were not reflected in practice. It was more of a desire on their part as human resource practitioners to be seen to be treating all employees equally (Gelens et al., 2014; Ross, 2013) and to avoid differentiating employees on the basis of talent

versus non-talent. This notwithstanding, there was acknowledgement of the fact that in the particular university context conceptualisation and implementation of TM practices tended to favour academics, resulting in the implicit differentiation of talent and non-talent.

As stated earlier, an organisation's perspective to talent influences its talent management practice. This is demonstrated below as the discussion considers identification, development and retention of academic talent in turn, and in relation to isomorphic pressures.

8.2.2 Isomorphic pressures on talent identification and development

Identification and recruitment of talent took different approaches across the universities due to different forces at play. Consistent with Barber et al.'s (1999) position on firm size and recruitment sources, the large and more established public university used formal and bureaucratic recruitment processes while the smaller religious and private universities used flexible, convenient and inexpensive methods. Government localization policy following the country's independence in 1964 and the need to democratize internal systems post-1994 (when the country became a multi-party democracy) provided particularly powerful coercive and normative pressures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) respectively on the public university. Furthermore, by virtue of being a state funded university, it had to deal with a high degree of public scrutiny in its operations. These pressures were not at play in religious and private universities since they were not under the direct influence of government and more crucially, they were non-existent then. For these, unlike the public university, pressure arose from legal requirements on accreditation with the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and concerns on legitimacy given their relative young age in the higher education sector which was dominated by public providers for a very long time. Internally, their financial status and commercial considerations influenced many of their TM decisions.

As a result the public university shifted from an earmarking strategy to the more open and competitive tournament strategy of selection and recruitment which was strictly adhered to. In institutional theory terms the shift was in response to normative pressures arising out of the need to act on shared group 'democratic'

values both within the university and at national level. In contrast, religious and private universities adopted a greater degree of flexibility in their selection and recruitment strategy which often alternated between tournaments and personal/employee referrals (and handpicking in the case of the private university) in a convenient and cost-effective manner that appealed to the owners.

The similarities between the private and religious universities in reliance on networks for identification and recruitment might be due to high level competition for academics and lack of extensive pool for candidates (van den Brink et al., 2013). The absence of a big talent pool makes use of tournaments or competitive methods less cost effective, although it might make political or legal sense. Unlike their public university counterpart which used recruitment systems rigidly, although they did not always yield the best qualified applicants, because its human resources policies were decided by a powerful central function and developed over time (Beardwell and Wright, 2004), religious and private universities had greater leeway on what recruitment processes to employ. Although similarities appeared between the religious and private universities, important differences with important ramifications on talent identification and recruitment existed. As highlighted in table 6 under the talent identification and recruitment theme the religious university (Case B) had unwritten preference for older academics for strategic and practical reasons and recruited on three-year rolling contracts while the private university's (Case C) recruitment was on four-year rolling contracts with an open policy on staff holding multiple positions with other institutions. The greater dominance of the chancellor in the private university granted him greater veto powers on recruitment, such as the power to handpick without any consultation, than his counterparts in the other universities. Clearly, in terms of talent identification and recruitment, type (ownership) of the university and the kind of isomorphic pressures and other constraints associated with it plays a crucial role in the processes used. Similarly, these forces were also observed to be at play in the universities' talent development decisions.

The study's findings showed that implementation of talent development practices mirrored a university's talent strategy or logics. As summarised in table 6 there is a marked difference between the public university on one hand and religious and private universities on the other in terms of talent strategy. While the public

university pursued a talent growing strategy, the other two implemented a talent buying strategy. These strategies entailed differences in level of commitment on talent development, variety of activities and resource allocation.

The public university's talent logics entailed the university's commitment and support towards talent development initiatives, initially in response to the coercive pressure of *Malawianization* policy and later as the dominant logics once the goals of *Malawianization* were met, as well as responding to mimetic pressure that led the university to pursue internationalization among its goals. The hallmarks of these talent logics were identification and recruitment of first degree holders who were supported all the way to attainment of a PhD degree. The university's commitment was spelt out in its strategic plan as it intensified efforts to improve the proportion of academics with PhD qualifications, making higher qualification a learning activity of strategic importance. Such is the case not only in Malawi but across Africa where, according to Hayward (2010), there were fewer than 50 percent of faculty with PhDs in most universities. For Malawian universities this proportion stands at 25 percent or less. The talent logics in the public university related well with the conceptualisation of talent as potential. By implication, recruitment of lowly qualified individuals into academic positions was, by and large, in line with its talent logics/strategy although one could argue that such a strategy was retained beyond its initial need due to lack of a talent pool in the wider national labour market. Pursuit of talent growing strategy was further enhanced by mimetic pressure arising from the university's aspirations on research and internationalization. In its attempt to compete with leading universities the university's research and internationalization policies mirrored competitors and included talent development initiatives that directly addressed the objectives of research and internationalization. In contrast, the level of commitment on talent development by the religious and private universities was way below that of the public university.

With less than 12 percent of academics holding PhD qualifications and none of them trained by their present institution demonstrated the two universities' talent buying strategy that entailed minimal investment in talent development. Of the two universities the private university took a more rigid approach than the religious university in terms of support towards talent development via the higher qualifications route. This appeared to reflect the institutions' core functions. While

research was highlighted as a mandate in institutional documents, it was more visible in the religious university than the private one. Such differences could in part be explained by the composition and the role that individual and organisational actors play in shaping and changing institutional logics (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). The religious university had more senior people, both in leadership and academic roles, with experience working in the public university as opposed to the private university. In that regard, similarities (at least on paper since there were other factors at play) between the religious and public universities were to be expected (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Although the quest for higher qualifications as a talent development activity tended to overshadow other practices, the universities implemented other talent development activities to varying degrees, and in line with their talent logics/strategies. The public university, for instance, was able to implement job shadowing (Davies and Davies, 2011) because of its relatively high number of highly qualified and experienced academics. It was also able to implement sabbaticals and expensive external training (Olukoshi and Zeleza, 2004) because of the nature of its tenured (for life) employment and its financial leeway. In view of the foregoing and what the findings from the individual universities showed, it is plausible to suggest that constrained financial situation forestalled investment in training and development necessary to tap the potential of internal labour markets, with decision makers seeing training budgets as costly ‘extras’ (Beardwell and Wright, 2004). While this was clear for religious and private universities and was reflected in their ‘talent buying’ strategy, the public university contemplated the relevance of its ‘talent growing’ strategy, particularly the idea of recruiting first degree holders. Attempts were made, with little success in most cases, to phase out recruitment of first degree holders, with one senior leader declaring that it was time the university started recruiting academics with a minimum qualification of a master’s degree. As a consequence of lack of investment in long term academic talent development especially in the talent buying universities, there was a greater proportion of poorly qualified staff in the ever-growing private [and religious] university sectors than the public one (Havergal, 2015). Furthermore, the findings show that the universities fell short of being what Davies and Davies (2011) call dynamic and effective organisations which ought to have well established processes for the professional learning of staff that are effectively connected with other key processes such as performance management. After academics were identified and

recruited there seemed to be no systems in place aimed at identifying people who were doing a great job in their role and how to help them develop their potential- which is a vital process for the management of talent.

8.2.3 Isomorphic pressures on talent retention

In terms of retention, both similarities and differences were observed across the universities. In all cases retention practices reflected an institution's talent strategy. As it would be shown below, the public university's talent growing strategy helped in setting it ahead of the talent buying universities. Clearly, retaining academics was considered vital for the universities to accomplish their missions and there were similarities in perceptions of what mattered among participants. Low pay was cited as one the decisive quit factors regardless of university type. This finding was consistent with findings of other studies elsewhere. For instance, a survey of academics in thirteen higher education institutions in South Africa found dissatisfaction with financial compensation and offer of a higher pay in another company to be among the top four reasons for academics to leave their institution (Theron et al., 2014). For those that stayed with their universities in spite of perceived poor remuneration the cost to the universities was a diversion from academic work to a focus on personal economic survival (Kerr and Mapanje, 2002). Poor salaries led to a consultancy syndrome, when academics sought short term consultancies devised by non-governmental organisations and other external donors rather than long term research projects that might support the universities' broader national vision. In a continuous struggle for survival academic staff worked in multiple sites, such as public university academics working part-time in religious and private universities (Havergal, 2015), for financial reasons (Olukoshi and Zeleza, 2004). While the question of pay on attracting and retaining talent is debatable (Verhaegen, 2005), it was a very important element for attracting and retaining academic talent in the three universities. Studies that have reported pay as less important have been in contexts where the pay is not seen as insultingly low (Hiltrop, 1999). For instance, Verhaegen (2005) found that remuneration is less important for the recruitment and retention of academic talent than commonly perceived in European business schools, citing academic freedom, research opportunities, professional and personal development, and stimulating peer community as some of the factors that surpassed remuneration in perceived

importance. Other practices that were deemed critical were tenure and career development.

Different forms of tenure were used which partly contributed to an institution's retention capabilities. The public university used tenure to assure continued employment with the [university] (McPherson and Winston, 1983) by offering guarantees with open-ended contracts (Dnes and Seaton, 1998). The peculiar element of tenure in this instance, unlike other academic labour markets that offer tenure with life-long contracts, was that it was neither preceded by an extended and serious probation (McPherson and Winston, 1983) nor nested in a robust performance management system. The fundamental principle of tenure decisions that whoever bids for a 30-year blank check needs to carry the burden of proof and establish his or her academic productivity beyond doubt (Weyland, 2011), was not strictly followed. The absence of a robust performance management system in the university implied that tenured employees did not prove deservedness since it was the default mode of employment. Nevertheless, such tenure arrangements complemented the university's talent growing strategy by supporting long term absences due to training and other developmental provisions. This was one of the key differences with religious and private universities. On their part religious and private universities hired academic talent on renewable three or four year contracts. With no limit to the number of renewals these were also regarded as tenured positions in line with Dnes and Seaton's (1998) observation. However, where academics sought life-long employment guarantees such tenure did not offer the sense of security comparable to that offered in the public university. This was cause for dissatisfaction among religious and private university participants, more so given the perceived lack of openness and objectivity in the processes that were followed to arrive at renewal decisions. In the religious university, for example, there was a system where top management got student feedback informally on academics' performance, and in the private university contract renewal was said to be at the mercy of the owner(s). Such uncertainties and the absence of pay levels high enough to compensate for the lack of job security in the religious and private universities meant this kind of tenure failed to help with retention. Elsewhere, universities that operate alternative career patterns by replacing tenure do so by offering greater returns in salary, control of time or priority of assignments (Plater, 1998), none of which was on offer in both the

religious and private universities, whose salaries were much lower than what public university academics were earning. The kind of tenure in the public university and its associated life-long guarantees was one of the reasons it was a destination of choice by those seeking an academic career. With growing competition for talent tenure can easily be used as an organisation's bargaining power. It is such an important aspect to work that an increasing number of departments in Netherlands, for instance, are experimenting with the tenure track system for young academic talent irrespective of whether there is a vacancy (van den Brink et al., 2013). As the observed findings have shown, it is not easy to hold on to academic talent on short-term contracts when such individuals are offered permanent employment elsewhere.

In terms of career development it was clear that religious and private universities were losing out. Guided by dominant talent buying logics they committed minimal resources towards development opportunities by focusing on less resource intensive options which, unfortunately, were not highly regarded by participants. This approach did not support career aspirations of young academics who branded their universities *training grounds* meant to provide experience which would propel them onto better pastures. The influence of career development opportunities on talent retention cannot be overlooked especially in a labour market that relies heavily on inexperienced and less qualified hands (Kerr and Mapanje, 2002). The link between career/professional development and retention of talented employees in general, and academic talent in particular, has found widespread support (Govaerts et al., 2011; Verhaegen, 2005; Sanyal, 1995; Theron et al., 2014). According to Govaerts et al. (2011) as long as employees feel that they are learning and growing, they are less inclined to leave. Once the need or feeling to learn and grow diminishes employees are inclined to seek fresh opportunities outside the organisation. This might partly explain the public university's continued brain drain (Dzimbiri, 2008). Certainly the power of career development opportunities did not go unnoticed. Both religious and private universities reported signs of change as they both sought to deal with mimetic pressures exerted by the public university.

From the foregoing, implementation of TM practices took place within a framework of external and internal influences or pressures (Beardwell and Wright, 2004). Such pressures could be legal requirements, public expectations, concerns on legitimacy, or the urge to act on shared group values (Barber et al., 1999). Thus far, the observed

findings demonstrated that public, religious and private universities responded in varying degrees and directions to isomorphic pressures. It was clear that, among other factors, type of university and their specific context had an influence in responses/TM practices. This mirrors the differences in organizing logics among the universities. The next section builds on this line of argument by examining the role of institutional logics in TM decisions.

8.3 The role of institutional logics in a university's TM decisions

In many respects the public university would relatively be considered a success. However, it was considered an outlying case by the religious and private universities. The existing ownership arrangements entailed much more than simply names. They would, for instance, entail the level of prestige associated with each university and the different levels on other endowments. Although all three universities were based in the same national higher education context, both religious and private universities admitted that their capabilities to compete with the public university fell short of the former's established economies of scale as afforded by government and other partners. As a result there was little in terms mimetic and normative pressures and that coercive pressures came from different sources because of differences in registration/establishment arrangements. To that effect, isomorphic pressures were limited in explaining how these universities adopted and implemented specific TM practices similar to or different from each other. Instead the universities turned to logics or interpretive schemas and aligned their practices to specific means of organizing. To shed more light on this assertion, this part discusses how institutional logics provide an alternative and additional explanation on why organisations implement or fail to implement certain TM practices. I use tenure and the dominance of management to illustrate the different logics at play across the universities.

The observed findings suggested that the different forms of tenure used in public and religious/private universities reflected differences in institutional logics. The private and religious universities were guided by business like logics which are characterised by the dominance of management. Their choice for fixed, renewable contracts was partly motivated by management's need to exercise greater control over talents and their productivity since levels of performance after tenure are not so

intensely monitored or enforced (McPherson and Winston, 1983). As such having arrangements for enforced periodic reviews of performance prior to contract renewal meant that the universities could decide against renewal of a contract without huge compensation packages akin to those associated with dismissing a tenured academic member of staff (Dnes and Seaton, 1998). Furthermore such contractual arrangements for cases B and C counter the strategic threat of overstaffing (Boxall and Purcell, 2016) as the institutions were able to exert greater periodic influence on talent flow. This clearly safeguarded the two university's commercial interests. In turn the arrangement provided the necessary safeguards against complacency in academic talent whose contractual renewal was not automatic. The public university on the other hand continued to be guided by collegiality traditions and little concern for cost implications. Collegiality principles meant that power was dispersed to the organisation members rather than management. As powerful institutional actors (Reay and Hinings, 2009) these members tended to resist potential changes to the organising principles. The dominance of management could be linked to existing logics and needs further elaboration.

With regards to the three universities, dominance of management related to each institution's location of power. While managements of both religious and private universities had veto power on many talent related decisions such as recruitment or retention following periodic performance reviews, their public university counterparts held very little veto power. Due to its collegiality traditions the public university was organized and run by committee structures. Consequently, individual leaders or managers had minimal discretionary power. There were marked differences between the public university and the others in terms of key actors who shaped institutional logics.

In the public university, where management was not as dominant, there was an array of powerful institutional actors ranging from individuals within and outside managerial cadres to unions or staff welfare committees. As a result there were multiple potential sources of influence on the dominant logics. In contrast the general expectation in the religious and private universities was that the owners provided the organizing principles or logics that suited their religious or business interests. Such differences were reflected in the levels of reported resistance thereby affecting institutions' pace of adaptability. Ability to adapt quickly was deemed

critical since coping with challenges associated with the war for talent required quick adaptation. According to Sanyal (1995), universities have seen a number of factors such as bureaucratization, unionization, traditional forms of protection such as tenure and academic freedom combining to insulate them from the need to adapt. As a result most reforms targeting the status quo, in some instances, faced resistance. This was the case with the public university where attempted changes that were deemed to challenge collegiality traditions were resisted. This was unlike religious and private universities which were characterised by the dominance of management and weak employee voices. Having discussed TM practices as they relate to isomorphic pressures and the role of institutional logics, the last part of this chapter considers the combined roles of institutional theory and institutional logics in providing the lenses through which to understand why institutions adopt or fail to adopt certain TM practices.

8.4 Institutional theory and institutional logics as lenses

The discussion in the preceding sections calls for the need to examine the relevance of the theoretical framework or the extent to which the framework helps in the understanding of talent management in view of the observed findings. The discussion on institutional theory and institutional logics in chapter two posits a number of avenues through which to consider the observed findings. On one hand, institutional isomorphism posits that organisations that share the same context tend to look more similar and adopt similar practices than those that do not (Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). The notion that organisations compete for resources, customers, political power, institutional legitimacy, social and economic fitness (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) implies that organisations' behaviour is a response to both market pressures as well as institutional pressures emanating from regulatory agencies, general social expectations and actions of leading organisations (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996). Consequently, organisations are under social influence and pressure to adopt practices and to adapt to, and be consistent, with their institutional environment (Tarique and Schuler, 2010). Institutional logics on the other hand provide the organizing principles for a field and guide the behaviour of field-level actors (Reay and Hinings, 2009). Also called internal interpretative

scheme (Paauwe and Boselie, 2007) institutional logics shape rational, mindful behaviour, and individual and organisational actors play a role in shaping and changing institutional logics (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). Conceptualising the three case study universities as situations requiring management of conflicting logics might help explain the extent of convergence and/or divergence, as predicted by institutional isomorphism, in talent management practices.

The observed findings suggest that although the universities operated in the same higher education field they were guided by different institutional logics leading to different organizing principles. As a result, although similarities existed in some respects, the general picture was that there was observable divergence regarding certain talent management practices. One area of divergence was talent identification and recruitment.

The interaction of organisational size, financial status and business-like logic, particularly the principle of cost-effectiveness or cost-control rationales (Martin et al., 2016), led the private university to use convenient and inexpensive practices. Convenient and inexpensive recruitment sources such as personal and employee referrals (Barber et al., 1999) were more appealing to the owners. Besides being cost-effective these methods afforded the responsiveness that the institution required to address staffing requirements. A similar situation was observed in the religious university, which alternated between convenient, inexpensive recruitment sources with the more standard competitive/tournament method of recruitment. How recruitment happened in the two universities was different from the bigger, more established public university. Following logics of democratic principles the public university used competitive/tournament methods. The logics of democracy were the outcome of national level shift in politics from dictatorship to multiparty democracy in 1994, prompting similar shifts in internal interpretative schemes in publicly funded institutions.

Similarly, while institutional isomorphism would predict that the universities would adopt similar employment practices, the private and religious universities took a different path from that of the public university by employing academic talent on short term, renewable contracts as opposed to tenure. These short term contracts were motivated by productivity concerns (Boxall and Purcell, 2016; McPherson and Winston, 1983) and compensation costs associated with dismissal of tenured

academic members of staff (Dnes and Seaton, 1998). Both these concerns are elements of business-like logics where organisations must be organised in accordance with logics of efficiency. Efforts in the public university to introduce and adopt new business-like logics faced resistance from powerful actors such as academic staff unions and welfare committees who rallied behind collegial principles of organizing in academia. Since collegial tradition is guided by one of its core values of dispersing power to the university's membership (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2010), universities are not traditionally associated with the dominance of management (Deem and Brehony, 2005) which is a key component of (new)managerialism. In the modern environments in which universities operate, political, economic and social pressures arising from government and market demands (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2010) have placed the old collegiality logics of organizing universities in conflict with those required for universities to successfully navigate today's terrain. The observation in the differences in logics between private and religious universities on one hand and the public university on the other could be attributed to the basis on which the universities were established. Private and religious universities were established on the basis of dominant management while the public university was established based on principles of collegiality which takes the ultimate control away from management. I bring the ideas in this discussion together into a talent logics framework depicted in figure 4 below.

This framework has been informed by the observation of findings from the three cases regarding what shapes talent strategy, institutional logics and TM practices, how institutional logics influence talent strategy and how these two in turn influence TM practices.

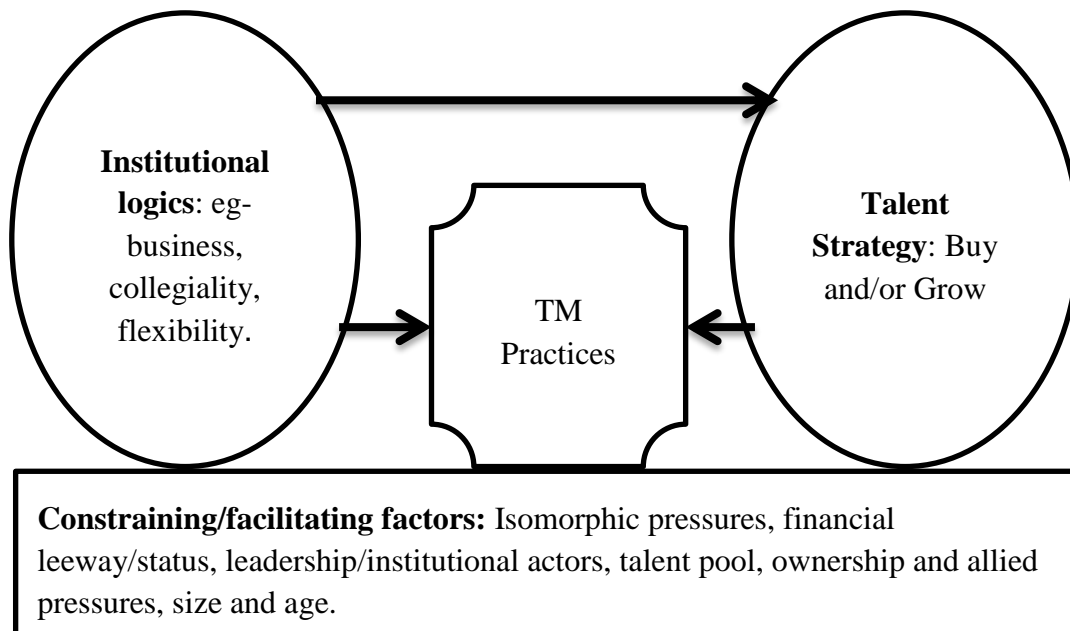


Figure 4 Talent logics framework showing relationships between

The above figure, starting from the top left circle, demonstrates that institutional logics influence adoption of a particular talent strategy which could either be talent buying or talent growing. It could also be a combination of the two strategies as a result of an institution's flexibility logics which would allow adaptation to specific circumstances. Together, institutional logics and talent strategy drive TM practices. For instance the private university's practice of recruiting academics on contract was driven by both the logics of cost-effectiveness and its talent buying strategy. Located at the bottom of the figure are constraining/facilitating factors. These include isomorphic pressures, financial leeway, institutional actors, talent pool, ownership, organisation size and age. These factors shaped decisions on logics and talent strategy. They either facilitated, such as a public university's greater financial leeway that allowed it to fully support its academics undergoing long term training, or constrained decisions, such as when a dominant leader vetoed a recruitment panel's decision at the private university.

8.5 Conclusion

Through a cross-case analysis that was anchored in institutional theory, institutional logics and the broad TM literature the chapter has used knowledge accumulated in the preceding chapters to compare and contrast three universities on the basis of their

conceptualisation of talent and implementation of TM practices. In so doing the chapter highlights the thesis' contribution to our understanding of the role of institutional logics in explaining the adoption of talent management practices by extending the explanation provided by institutional theory's isomorphic pressures. This has been achieved by situating the study in Malawi's higher education context which comprises public, religious and private universities. This context provides opportunities to further understanding of the role of institutional logics and isomorphic pressures given the different ownership arrangements of universities as well as our appreciation of the role of context, away from multinational organisations and the dominance of western conceptualisations.

Chapter 9 . Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This thesis has analysed academic talent management in Malawian universities using institutional theory and institutional logics as lenses. The findings are based on the unique context of the Malawian higher education sector which comprises state-funded (public), religious and private universities. The differences and similarities in talent conceptualisation and TM practices have been drawn out. Located in the field of talent management, this thesis' key contribution is that the use of institutional theory, one of the dominant frameworks in TM studies (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015) falls short in explaining why organisations implement or fail to implement TM practices. A richer explanation is provided when institutional theory's isomorphic pressures are considered alongside institutional logics. In view of isomorphic pressures, it was expected that religious and private universities would mimic the state-funded university's talent growing strategy and other TM practices, for instance. However, using business logics as their interpretative schema the two non-state universities adopted a talent buying strategy and did not mimic some of the market leader's TM practices.

The study set out to contribute towards knowledge on academic talent management, in particular how isomorphic pressures and institutional logics influence TM decisions. This was explored in the context of three differently owned universities in Malawi, a developing country in Africa. Three empirical chapters have dealt with how each of the state-funded, religious and private universities managed academic talent. Following the three chapters is a discussion chapter which undertook the process of drawing out similarities and differences among the cases. By way of concluding the thesis, this final chapter first provides a summary of findings in relation to conceptualisation of talent, TM practices and the effect of isomorphic pressures and institutional logics. This is then followed by consideration of the thesis' contribution both to theory and practice, consideration for further research and recommendations for practice. Finally, concluding thoughts focus on the degree to which academic TM is entrenched in Malawi's higher education sector, a proposed reclassification of players in the sector, and a reflexive summary. This

reflexive summary is necessary as I look back to my own role as a researcher in the process of producing this work.

9.2 Summary of findings

The study set out to achieve its main objectives through three specific questions. The first was on how universities define, identify, develop and retain academic talent. The second was to examine the extent to which universities adopt similar talent management practices, and the third question sought to analyse the role of institutional logics in shaping the adoption of various talent management practices.

With regards to the first question, the study found that talent was conceptualized in multidimensional ways in both inclusive and exclusive terms. Across all universities talent was either inclusive of all academics or exclusive to academics because of the key role that academics play towards the core of university business and because of the difficulties in finding and retaining academics – recognising the competitive nature of the academic labour market. It was also observed that adoption of either a talent growing or talent buying strategy was linked to specific institutional logics. Furthermore, although participants valued many forms of academic talent development the most important one was training for higher qualifications. This was so because of the higher proportion of academics still in need of higher qualifications. As such any university that offered such opportunities stood a better chance of attracting and retaining talent.

Talent identification and recruitment were consistent with Barber et al.'s (1999) assertion regarding the influence of a firm's size on practices used. This was reflected in the larger, more established public university's use of formal and bureaucratic recruitment processes compared to the flexible, convenient and inexpensive methods used by the smaller religious and private universities. These differences were more pronounced when an institution's practices were examined in relation to isomorphic pressures and institutional logics.

The public university faced coercive, normative and mimetic pressures from sources different from those experienced by religious and private universities. It also operated based on institutional logics different from those operating in the non-state universities. For instance while the public university (established by an act of

parliament) faced normative pressure to democratise internal systems as well as facing constant public scrutiny by virtue of being state-funded, religious and private universities on the other hand had to deal with challenges of accreditation with NCHE and deal with concerns of legitimacy owing to their relative inexperience in the higher education sector.

Where institutional logics were concerned, the public university was guided by collegiality traditions, logics of democracy and little concern for cost implications of its TM decisions whereas the religious and private universities were run on the basis of business-like logics characterised by the dominance of management. The dominance of management in the two non-state universities entailed that their managements had veto power on many talent-related decisions. This was not the case in the public university as it was virtually run by various university committees. Consequently there was a greater array of powerful institutional actors with potentially greater influence on dominant logics in the public university than the others.

9.3 Contributions of this research

This thesis has made theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions to the study of talent management. The key theoretical contribution of the thesis is that institutional logics, through interaction with isomorphic pressures, play an important role in our understanding of why organisations adopt (or fail to adopt) talent management practices. This and other contributions that are relevant to researchers and practitioners alike are elaborated below.

9.3.1 Theoretical contributions

The research is located in the field of talent management where talent management theory, which was once lacking (Lewis and Heckman, 2006), has been growing. There have been persistent calls to advance our understanding of talent management using dominant theoretical frameworks and exploring the potential of alternative frameworks. The present study stretches the boundaries of the use of institutional theory, one of the dominant frameworks in talent management studies (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015), in our understanding of why organisations implement or fail to implement TM practices. The study does this by incorporating the role of

institutional logics in that explanation because isomorphic pressures alone do not adequately explain organisations' actions and decisions on TM practices. This study has found that institutional logics combine with isomorphic pressures to explain why organisations within the same context may adopt different TM approaches. As this thesis has demonstrated in the discussion chapter (Chapter 8), the reason why one organisation may accept practices of another, successful, organisation is because such practices fit in or reinforce the imitating organisation's logics. Inversely, rejection of another's practices may be a result of conflicts with existing logics which the imitating organisation is unwilling to replace.

9.3.2 Methodological contributions

In terms of research practice in the field of talent management, much conceptualisation of talent is unitarist where the agenda is set by management and perspectives of other stakeholders are not recognized (Thunnissen et al., 2013b). However, it is important that perspectives of all stakeholders should inform practice and research on talent management. This has significant implications for research on talent management in terms of the design of studies in the area. In turn, better designed research is more likely to inform practice in talent management and translate into better outcomes for organisations and individual employees. In this vein I reiterate the observations by Cooke et al. (2014) that many TM studies have targeted HR practitioners/ managers as key respondents. In any case, these respondents may represent views that may diverge from those of other line managers and other employees (Cooke et al., 2014). This study has found such divergence in situations where, for instance, HR professionals sought to include all employees in their conceptualisation of talent against the commonly held view that focussed on academics. The present study extends Cooke et al.'s (2014) contribution by not only interviewing other top management, HR practitioners and line managers but also ordinary employees, including those that left the organisation, as key stakeholders.

The thesis also makes a unique contribution towards studying universities in Malawi and other countries that have similar university ownership arrangements. Such ownership arrangements have the potential to shape unique institutional logics, which in turn influence an institution's talent strategy and TM practices. Previous studies on the country's university sector have only recognized the public and private

dichotomy. This thesis has demonstrated the utility of a three tier structure based on ownership such that sampling ought to consider the unique characteristics of public, religious and private universities.

9.3.3 Empirical contributions

Current literature on talent management is dominated by western models and conceptions, and little or nothing on Africa yet there is unanimous agreement that context matters in the implementation of TM practices. This study therefore adds to the literature on academic talent management in developing country universities such as the majority of those in Africa.

Furthermore, most developments in the talent management field have focussed on global talent management (De Vos and Dries, 2013) and multinational companies (Garavan, 2012). Such a focus adds further neglect of certain contexts that do not dovetail global TM or the multinational character. By examining academic talent management in Malawi's higher education sector, the study addresses the shortage of literature on academic talent management by universities that adopt a narrower national character.

The other empirical contribution is that the study provides a timely evaluation of stakeholder perceptions on the state of talent management and insights on various factors that facilitate or frustrate academic talent management. It has isolated what employees consider to be key factors when making commitment related decisions. For instance the study has brought to the fore employee motives when joining specific universities such as the need for further training among talent that is in search of personal development. The fact that some participants considered their universities as *training ground*, *retirement homes* and *post-office-boxes* should be a wakeup call to university leaders and managers on the need to work towards changing such perceptions. Provision of opportunities to academic talent should be anchored in a context where all aspects of the system pull in the same direction in ensuring retention that is a result of institutions' deliberate effort.

9.4 Reflections on limitations, areas for future research, and reflexivity

9.4.1 Limitations and areas for future research

A key limitation to this research relates to whether all similarly owned universities would operate based on similar institutional logics. This in turn gives rise to the question of the extent to which universities within a sub-sector face similar isomorphic pressures. Although this thesis has dealt with these questions in relation to universities with different ownership arrangements it would be worthwhile to investigate similarities and differences among universities within a sub-sector in order to draw out sub-sector specific lessons for policy makers and practitioners. For instance while it is effectively mandatory for religious and private universities to register with and be accredited by the NCHE, public universities' participation in NCHE's activities seems voluntary at best. This is in view of the fact that all public universities were established by Acts of Parliament and the role of NCHE on these was yet to be synchronised with public universities' legal instruments. It would therefore be worthwhile to investigate the forces and logics at play for public universities' behaviour towards submitting themselves to the mandate of NCHE. Such issues lead to one of the ways in which this research could be pushed forward: a focus in universities within a sub-sector to explore more nuanced aspects of context, leadership and other variables in talent management.

9.4.2 Reflexive summary

The quality of qualitative research is ensured by, among other elements, reflexivity (Symon and Cassell, 2012). Reflexivity is defined by Haynes (2012) as an awareness of the researcher's role in the practice of research and the way this is influenced by the object of the research, enabling the researcher to acknowledge the way in which he or she affects both the research processes and outcomes. According to Symon and Cassell (2012) reflective and reflexive skills allow researchers to explore the impact of their own research in order to generate learning on which to base future action, challenge and critique their assumptions and research practices throughout the research process, and draw upon their knowledge to respond appropriately to the

research context. Reflexivity is particularly crucial in instances where one is researching their own organisation as this raises ethical and reflexive dilemmas that need attending to (Cassell, 2015).

As an employee of one of the cases being researched there was familiarity between the interviewees and me as a researcher. Such familiarity had the potential to blur the lines between the researcher and the researched. As Tietze (2012) puts it, there is the risk of exploitation as the formal parameters of the research interview can burst boundaries as interviews are continued outside this formal setting. Using some of the strategies for reflexive awareness by Haynes (2012) I endeavoured to achieve reflexivity during fieldwork, firstly, listening to digital recordings of interviews to reflect on the interview process and secondly, sharing and discussing initial transcripts with my supervisor who provided further insights on how to deal with situations as the research process evolved.

Through the reflexive process it became clear that my being an employee of one of the researched universities led some participants to assume that I already had knowledge of the issues they were raising during the interview process and therefore, saw no need to provide a lot of detail. Participants' statements during interviews such as "I am sure you know about the bond thing..." or "you know how this ended so I will not take you through that..." necessitated change in the way I would ask guiding questions and probes. Such familiarity was also evident in the other two cases. Although I never worked for them some interviewees had worked for my university before. As a result such interviewees sought to draw me into discussions or debates on the issues. By maintaining methodological correctness and procedural objectivity (Siebert and Mills, 2007) I was able to constantly remind and guide interviewees towards the aims of the interviews. This was crucial because in order to retain the interpretative stance which I adopted, I needed to rely on participants' sense making in producing this thesis without compromising it with my familiarity of the context or my employment with one of the cases.

The other consequence resulting from my employment with one of the cases was that some interviewees regarded me as an employee rather than a researcher. As such the inherent assumption of my knowledge about issues affecting the university led them to believe that "I could go and write a research report based on my experiences with the employer". This created a potential ethical dilemma regarding representations of

my respondents in the thesis. In order to avoid my own narrative in the production of this thesis I took two approaches. Firstly, by reiterating my role as a researcher while avoiding engaging in debates with them that sought my opinion on certain matters, it was possible to focus on views of participants, not only among participants in my own university but the others as well. For the others, their knowledge that I was employed by one of the cases led to instances where interviewees thought I could provide my opinion on matters that needed them to express opinion in sector-wide issues. Secondly, my supervisors who were subject matter specialists and external to the study context were constantly challenging and critiquing my positioning and claims during field work and throughout the writing up process. They helped me to constantly reflect on my role as a researcher (researching a very familiar context that included own organisation) in order to focus on the data that the cases provided thereby avoiding potential biases while at the same time being encouraged to “take a sceptical, demanding approach to emerging explanations” (Miles and Huberman, 1994:263).

9.5 Recommendations for practice

The study has brought to the fore a number of contextual issues that need to be considered in practice in order to make the most of the benefits of talent management. Firstly, there is need to focus on leadership. This thesis has highlighted leadership’s facilitating and constraining influence across all three universities. Such influence was related to the level of decision making authority that particular leaders had. In most instances these were leaders at the very top using their discretion. Developing a talent mind set in leaders at different levels of the institutional hierarchy, accompanied by the requisite decision making powers, could be the initial step followed by a review of how leadership is constituted and capacitated in the universities. This is fundamental in a country and continent where academic leadership is one of the widely acknowledged challenges (Bakuwa and Mouton, 2015). Universities need to recognise the changing higher education landscape and how academic talent can be the differentiating factor between a university’s success and stagnation. Secondly, the importance of a shared understanding of what constitutes talent need not be overemphasized. While actions suggested that talent was exclusively (academics) conceptualized there were diverse views among participants in their understanding. Such diverse perceptions have the potential risk

of leading to confusion as to whom the actual talent are for the universities. In turn this might lead to confusion on operationalising TM. Finally, having entrenched a talent mind-set across the organisation, and having built consensus on conceptualisation, universities need to design TM systems and processes that are strategically driven and integrated with each other. In order to get the most of their talent efforts, universities should put measurement or monitoring and evaluation at the centre of their TM systems and processes.

9.6 Final concluding remarks

9.6.1 Academic TM in Malawi is still work in progress

The war for [academic] talent in Malawian universities is far from being won. Universities lack capacity to either grow or buy talent. In a highly competitive, global, academic labour market those that are doing well in this war offer themselves as talent magnets and provide clear propositions as to what the institutions offer their talent. In such organisations all leaders at all levels demonstrate their support for implementing a talent mind set (Davies and Davies, 2010). However, this thesis failed to establish this norm as leaders at various levels lacked the level of capacity, responsibilities and authority to meaningfully participate in systematic TM. Furthermore, although there was understanding that academic talent was critical to the universities' missions, the universities did not have specific TM strategies in place. This weakness was compounded by lack of integration among individual TM activities and the absence of other processes that would ensure effective TM. For instance the absence of (objective) performance management systems makes it difficult to ascertain the contributions of talent to the universities or indeed the level of effectiveness of the universities' talent-related practices. In view of the foregoing, and as related to what Silzer and Dowell (2010:21-22) say regarding TM that:

Talent moves through an organisation and through various talent management systems and processes. Ultimately the success of each of the components and the system as a whole should be measured and the results used to guide both the business strategy and the talent strategy. Talent management, however, is more than a string of HR programmes and processes (...). It is a new [way] of thinking

about, designing, and implementing talent processes and systems. In some ways, it is a systems approach to thinking about talent. (...) Talent management systems and processes need to be strategically driven and fully integrated with each other,

this thesis concludes that TM in Malawian universities is not fully entrenched; it is still work in progress.

9.6.2 Malawi's higher education: A sector with three distinct players

Public, private, and religious universities need to be viewed as three distinct players. Given the different institutional logics and isomorphic pressures at play among the three universities it was not surprising that they adopted different approaches to TM with instances where imitation across universities was resisted or rejected. It is therefore important to regard the Malawian academic labour market as comprising three distinct players based on their ownership arrangements. This thesis has shown that such ownership arrangements have repercussions for talent management practice. This stance seeks to dissuade researchers and policy makers on Malawi's higher education sector from looking at it as a dichotomy of public versus private universities. While the public university sector has clearly been seen as a distinctive player occupying a place of market leader, the tendency to bundle religious and private universities has masked the uniqueness of each of them in their approach to talent management. In view of the above, it is plausible to propose that Malawi's higher education sector be viewed as a trichotomy comprising public (state-funded), religious and private universities. This finding is significant for talent management, broadly.

In broader terms, this research is very significant to scholars researching TM and those attempting to link adoption of TM practices and isomorphic pressures, because it offers an alternative explanation and a deeper understanding of why organisations adopt (or fail to adopt) TM practices. It challenges the explanation provided by isomorphism by further linking an organisation's TM decisions to institutional logics. This thesis therefore addresses calls to broaden TM theory by providing empirical evidence to the commonly used frameworks as well as finding alternative

frameworks. By so doing the thesis provides a platform on which future TM research can be anchored.

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Appendices

Appendix A1: List of study participants for case A

Participant	Gender	Position/rank	Service (years) ¹	Comments
A1	Male	Lecturer	9	-
A2	Male	Head of Department & Associate Professor	12	-
A3	Male	Director of Research Centre & Associate Professor.	21	Has held government positions at Director level on secondment
A4	Female	HRM Professional/ Assistant Registrar	1	Among the first crop of specialised HRM professionals
A5	Female	Professor	>30	-
A6	Male	Professor	>30	-
A7	Male	Former Senior Lecturer	>10	Professor at a university in another country
A8	Male	Pro Vice Chancellor & Professor	>30	-
A9	Male	Former College Principal & Professor	>30	Retired but re-employed on contract
A10	Male	Lecturer	13	-
A11	Male	Union Leader & Lecturer	10	-
A12	Male	Former Vice Chancellor	>30	MP and Cabinet Minister at the time of data collection.
A13	Female	Head of Department & Lecturer	13	-
A14	Male	Professor	24	Joined the university on secondment from government
A15	Male	Dean of Faculty & Senior Lecturer	10	-
A16	Male	Professor	22	-
A17	Male	Registrar	12	-

¹ Length of service includes the period when the staff member was on study leave, sabbatical, leave of absence which ranges from 1 to 5 years at any qualifying time.

Appendix A2: List of participants for case B

Participants	Gender	Position	Service (years)	Comments
B1	Male	Dean of Faculty & Lecturer	5	Started as a part-time academic
B2	Male	Lecturer	5	-
B3	Male	Head of Department & Lecturer	8	Started as a part-time
B4	Female	Senior Lecturer	9	Retired elsewhere
B5	Male	Head of Department & Lecturer	6	-
B6	Male	Dean of Faculty & Senior Lecturer	9	Retired elsewhere
B7	Male	Former Senior Lecturer	4	Quit and joined a public university
B8	Male	Former Lecturer	5	Quit and joined a public university
B9	Male	Professor	5	Retired elsewhere
B10	Male	Registrar	4	Worked in similar position at a public university before
B11	Male	Former Lecturer	2	Quit to join a public university

Appendix A3: List of participants for case C

Participants	Gender	Position	Service (years)	Comments
C1	Male	Head of Department & Senior Lecturer	6	-
C2	Female	Associate Lecturer	3	-
C3	Male	Senior Lecturer	4	Retired elsewhere
C4	Male	Head of Department & Associate Lecturer	2	-
C5	Male	Dean of Faculty & Professor	7	Retired at a public university
C6	Male	Lecturer	4	-
C7	Female	Senior lecturer	3	Holds a position in government
C8	Female	Associate Lecturer	5	Holds a similar position at a public university
C9	Male	Staff Welfare Committee Leader & Associate Lecturer	3	-
C10	Male	Registrar		-

Appendix B: Interview guide

Preamble

My name is Edister Jamu, a PhD student at Leeds University exploring talent management in Malawian universities. I have a number of questions to ask you about your experiences. There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in what you have to say. Your name will not be used in any of the write ups of the research and I will make sure that any quotes used cannot be identified with you. I would like to record this interview in order to transcribe it later. Nobody else besides myself and my supervisors will listen to the recording or read the transcripts. Is this ok?

Key concepts: Below are the study's key concepts that will guide our discussion. I have also provided a list of what are usually considered talent management components. The list is to be used as a guide because it is not exhaustive.

Talent(s): "An individual's skills, abilities and potential; a specific person by virtue of skills in an area or a group of employees..." Silzer & Dowell (2010).

Talent management: "The systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organisation". Davies & Davies (2010).

Talent management components: usually include recruiting, selection, promotion, placement, assignments, on boarding, assimilation, retention initiatives, reward and recognition programs, training, development, learning opportunities, coaching, mentoring, leadership and executive education and development, performance management, career planning and development, high potential identification and development, employee diversity efforts, succession management and planning, organisational talent management reviews, measurement and evaluation of talent management efforts. Silzer & Dowell (2010).

Category One: Managers/Leaders

Introductory questions

Just to start I am going to ask you some general questions about your role and how you came to be a manager/leader.

1. Could you briefly tell me a bit about yourself, when you first joined the university and when you first started in your present role?
2. How did you come to be in this particular role in the university?
3. Tell me a little about your work experience in management/leadership. Where have you worked and what kind of roles have you had?
4. How has being in your present role influenced your understanding of talent issues in the university?

Definition of talent

In this part of the interview I would like to find out how talent is understood

5. How is talent defined in your university?
 - a. What is the meaning of talent in your university?
 - b. Whom does the university consider talent? Why is that so?
 - c. Does the meaning encompass all employees or selected ones?
 - d. If selected ones: how are those considered talent treated as compared to those not considered as talent?
 - e. What is the rationale behind the way the university understand talent?
6. Is there a difference in what talent means to you individually and what it means to the university?
 - a. If yes, how?

TM programme

7. Does your university have a talent management programme?
 - a. When did it start?
 - b. Why did it start?
 - c. What specific activities/practices are included in that programme?
 - d. Whose responsibility is TM in your university?
 - i. person/office/department/committee?
8. Can you explain how the perception and treatment of talent have evolved since the time that you joined the university.

Identification and recruitment of talent

9. How does the university identify talent?
10. Can you tell me the mechanisms that are used in determining the required talent?
11. How does the identified talent get recruited?

- a. Who does the recruiting?
- b. How is the process managed?

Talent development

- 12. How is talent developed?
- 13. Who is responsible for the development of talents once recruited?
- 14. Can you explain the range of talent development initiatives that are in place?
 - a. On the job training? What is involved and how is it run?
 - b. External training initiatives?
 - c. Self-training initiatives?

Retention of talent

- 15. How does the university ensure retention of talents?
- 16. How have staff reacted to retention strategies that are in place?

TM in other universities/institutions

- 17. Do you know if other universities or institutions in Malawi's university education sector have adopted any specific policies or practices for talent management?
- 18. In comparison to other universities in Malawi, how do you fare when it comes to attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining key staff/talent? Why do you think that is the case?
- 19. In comparison to other universities in region and beyond, how competitive is your university in attracting and retaining talent?

Factors influencing application of TM ideas and practices

- 20. What internal and external factors facilitate implementation of TM policies/practices?
 - a. Eg: Political will, how? Budgetary support? Decision making processes/authority? Institutional and national policy?
- 21. What internal and external factors restrain implementation of TM policies/practices?
 - a. Eg: Political interference? Budgetary constraints? Decision making powers? Institutional and national policy?
- 22. How are decisions on talent made and executed?
 - a. Eg: recruitment, development, retention?

23. How much authority do you have on talent decisions?
- a. Is it just proposing or authorising? Who has the final say on what gets implemented?

The influence of institutional ownership

24. Are there any ways by which ownership arrangement (public/private/church) of the university affect talent management
- a. Eg: recruitment, development, retention.

Future directions on TM

25. How would you describe the university's capabilities to compete for talent?
- a. Nationally? Regionally? Globally?

Assessment of talent management

26. How does the university monitor and evaluate talent management
- a. Eg: Effects of TM; Value for money; Satisfaction of talents

Concluding questions

27. Is there anything else you would like to mention about your experiences with regards to talent management in this university?
28. Do you have any documents in mind which might be of interest to this particular study?
29. Do you have any colleagues (who are still around or left to work elsewhere) who may also provide insight on the issues?

Category Two: Current Employees

Introductory questions

Just to start I am going to ask you some general questions about your role and how you came to be a manager/leader.

1. Could you briefly tell me a bit about yourself, when you first joined the university and how you have progressed since joining?
2. Tell me a little about your work experience. Where else have you worked and what kind of roles have you had?

Defining talent

3. How is talent defined in your university?
 - a. What is the meaning of talent in your university?

- b. Whom does the university consider talent? Why is that so?
 - c. Does the meaning encompass all employees or selected ones?
 - d. If selected ones: how are those considered talent treated as compared to those not considered as talent?
 - e. What is the rationale behind the way the university understand talent?
4. Is there a difference in what talent means to you individually and what it means to the university?
- b. If yes, how?

Identification and recruitment of talent

5. How does the university identify and recruit talent?
- a. Can you tell me a bit about your own experience?
 - b. How would you describe the process that you went through prior to your recruitment?

Development of talent

6. How is talent developed?
7. Who is responsible for the development of talents once recruited?
8. Can you explain the range of talent development initiatives that you have gone through since your recruitment?
- a. On the job training? What is involved and how is it run?
 - b. External training initiatives?
 - c. Self-training initiatives?

Retention of talent

9. How does the university ensure retention of talents?
10. How have staff reacted to retention strategies that are in place?
11. How has been your personal reaction to the practices/initiatives?
12. How do you compare talent retention efforts here and your previous workplace?
(for those who worked elsewhere before)

Comparison with other universities/institutions

13. Do you know if other universities or institutions in Malawi's university education sector have adopted any specific policies or practices for talent management?

14. In comparison to other universities in Malawi, how do you rate your university on attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining talent?

Factors influencing application of talent management

15. What internal and external factors facilitate implementation of TM policies/practices?
- a. Eg: Political will, how? Budgetary support? Decision making processes/authority? Institutional and national policy?
16. What internal and external factors restrain implementation of TM policies/practices?
- a. Eg: Political interference? Budgetary constraints? Decision making powers? Institutional and national policy?
17. How are decisions on talent made and executed?
- a. Eg: recruitment, development, retention?
18. Can you tell me situations when you experienced or witnessed facilitating or constraining factors on the application of talent management?

The role of university ownership

19. Are there any ways by which ownership arrangement (public/private/church) of the university affect talent management
- a. Eg: how are recruitment, development, retention affected by ownership structure?

Future directions

20. What are your thoughts on the university's capabilities to compete for talent in the global market in future?
21. What makes you rate it that way?

Concluding questions

22. Is there anything else you would like to mention about your experiences with regards to talent management in this university?
23. Do you have any colleagues (who are still around or left to work elsewhere) who may also provide insight on the issues?

Category Three: Former Employees

Introductory question

1. Could you briefly tell me a bit about yourself, what you are currently doing and how you got there?
 - a. Where else have you worked and what kind of roles have you had?

Previous employment with university X

2. Looking back to your employment with university X, how would you describe your experiences
 - a. How did you get recruited?
 - b. Tell me the factors or issues that influenced your decision to join university X
 - Salary and other benefits, opportunities to learn and develop new skills?
 - c. Can you explain the range of development initiatives that you underwent?
 - On the job training, external training, self-development initiatives.
 - d. Tell me how your career progressed while working for university X
 - e. How would you compare:
 - Talent identification and recruitment practices between university X and your current employer?
 - Talent development initiatives between university X and your current employer?
 - Talent retention initiatives between university X and your current employer?
 - f. Can you think of a time when you felt particularly happy or sad with regards to:
 - Recruitment of talents
 - Development of talents
 - Retention of talents

Decision to quit university X

3. Can you recall how the decision to quit university X was arrived at?
 - a. How much of that decision had to do with how the university was dealing with:
 - Talent development
 - Talent retention

- b. Were there specific incidents leading up to your quitting?
 - If yes, can you elaborate.

Concluding questions

4. Is there anything else you would like to mention about your experiences with regards to talent management in university X?
5. Do you have any colleagues (who are still around or left to work elsewhere) who may also provide insight on talent management issues for university X?

Appendix C: The template development process

Constructing an initial template

This was constructed on the basis of three transcripts from the public university case. Clustering was based on the research questions as well as background information of interviewees and the university.

Initial template

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background of interviewee <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Career path 1.2. Current role 2. History <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. University history 2.2. Talent management in university <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2.1. General approach 2.2.2. Policy developments 2.2.3. Leadership 3. General talent management issues <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Leadership <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1.1. Qualifications and experience 3.2. Resistance 3.3. Systems and structures 3.4. Policies 3.5. Financing/funding 3.6. General difficulties 4. Definition of talent <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Qualifications 4.2. Attributes 4.3. Classification <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.3.1. Academics 4.3.2. Other staff 4.3.3. Students 5. Talent identification <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1. Processes 5.2. Responsibility 5.3. Standards/requirements 5.4. Difficulties | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Talent development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1. Training 6.2. Other activities 6.3. Location 6.4. Funding 6.5. Responsibility 6.6. Bonding/accountability 7. Talent retention <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7.1. Policies 7.2. Rewards <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7.2.1. Remuneration 7.2.2. Promotion 7.3. Conditions of service 7.4. Work environment 7.5. Recognition 7.6. Talent visibility 7.7. Problems 8. Organisational characteristics <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1. Culture/climate/traditions 8.2. Management style 8.3. Ownership <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8.3.1. Public 8.3.2. Private 8.3.3. Religious 9. Other universities/competitors <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9.1. National 9.2. Regional 9.3. Global 9.4. Other sectors 10. A.O.B |
|--|--|

Modified Template Version 2

The initial template was applied to the three transcripts that were used to construct it in order to ascertain the degree of coverage of relevant themes. It was also applied to

additional transcripts. This process led to changes, which are detailed below, to produce version 2 of the template.

Integrative theme ‘responsibility’: Responsibility, which describes who is in charge of or accountable for the various activities, was included as a second level theme under talent development and talent identification in the initial template. Going through interviewees’ accounts it was clear that ‘responsibility’ run across other themes as well. For example when talking about conditions of service as an aspect of retention, one interviewee said that

The way the university is set up, nobody from outside will improve the conditions and regulations. It is ourselves...the vice chancellor downwards... My experience has shown me that we behave as if conditions, regulations of service for all members of staff come from somewhere. That it's that body that will correct ills, improve things, and bring in innovations, which is not true...we run things. Now people, both academics and administrators, haven't understood that. They don't know that they hold their own future in their hands. They think somebody else holds it, no (Male Top Manager).

As a consequence of this observation, second level theme ‘responsibility’ under talent identification and talent development was deleted.

Inserting ‘Inclusive and Exclusive understanding of talent’: Two new third level themes, ‘Inclusive understanding of talent and Exclusive understanding of talent’ were added under ‘Definition of talent/Classification’. The initial three third-level themes under ‘Definition of talent/Classification’ were consequently changed to level four themes under ‘Definition of talent/Classification/Exclusive understanding of talent’. This modification conforms to the common categorization of talent that exists in literature where talent is either inclusive or exclusive. In the present instance, that inclusivity or exclusivity would apply to either academics or non-academics or students or across those categories.

Talent, if I can equate talent with ability and expertise I would say that if there is anything that makes me proud being a member of the university is the high level or highest concentration or highly

qualified, quote and quote talented academics (male academic leader).

You must have talent for a particular job that you are doing... so personally I would not go for this boxing of people that if you are in this category you will remain in that category (Female Academic Leader).

Inserting second and third level themes under ‘Definition of talent’: In order to capture the differences in how participants define talent and how they think their university defines it, second level theme ‘Definition of talent/whose definition is it?’ was added to which two third-level themes ‘Definition of talent/Whose definition is it?/Participant definition’ and ‘Definition of talent/Whose definition is it?/What participant thinks is university definition’ were also added.

The university has a different perception I know. The university’s perception is that once you are employed as a CTS (Clerical, Technical and Support) you will remain a CTS even if the CTS member of staff improves himself or herself they remain at that level. We have had to fight some battles...we had to fight for him (technician) to do a degree because for the university you are CTS, employed as a technician and you don’t need a degree (Female Academic Leader).

On the basis of my experience it seems that when they talk about talent, essentially they are talking about intellectual capacity in a particular specialist field... Just academics. If that extended to all aspects of the university we wouldn’t have the kind of mediocrity which I see around (Professor).

Inserting third level themes under ‘Talent development’: While training that leads to either a masters or PhD degree has been the most popular and sought after as a way of developing talent, other approaches have been noted. To achieve specificity, three third-level themes were added to the initial template. They included ‘Talent development/Other activities/Mentorship’, ‘Talent development/Other activities/Exposure’ and ‘Talent development/Other activities/Induction’.

Previously we had mentors. When you joined the profession you had to be oriented in issues to do with curriculum development, teaching and learning at university. Once this was done, at departmental level the expectation was that you would have some senior members in your specialised discipline who would mentor you in specific research areas ...or where they are writing and publishing they would ask you to do analysis of some of their work...through this process you would grow... (Senior Lecturer).

Inserting third level themes under ‘Talent identification’: Two third-level themes that encapsulate the processes followed to identify talent were added. They were ‘Talent identification/Processes/Earmarking’ and ‘Talent identification/Processes/Responses to adverts’.

...I was literally identified in my fifth year because then bachelor of education was a five-year programme...two of us were identified to remain and become staff associates. We were just told verbally...(Professor)

My experience is that there was a vacancy in the department which was advertised in the papers. I happened to see the adverts and I applied. I expressed interest to join the academic profession (Senior Lecturer).

Modifying top-level theme ‘Background of interviewee’: This top-level theme was modified to ‘Background information’ in order to capture information on participants and their university. Under this modified top-level theme, ‘career path’ was revised reflect the fact that it is to do with participants and became ‘Background information/Career path of participants’.

Deleting second-level theme ‘Background information/Current role’: It was felt that this would sufficiently be captured within NVivo through NVivo’s function that classifies “nodes” and assigns “attributes”. Through that function an attribute of rank or role would be assigned to all participants.

Deleting top-level theme ‘History’: It was felt that second and third-level themes under ‘History’ would better be served elsewhere. Consequently, ‘History/University history’ was moved to ‘Background information’, and retained its status as second-

level theme while the others (2.2; 2.2.1; 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 – Initial template) were shifted to top-level theme ‘General talent management issues’. As a result of this, second-level theme ‘Talent management in university’ was deleted because it would serve no purpose; third-level theme ‘Leadership’ was deleted because it was redundant with second-level theme ‘General talent management issues/Leadership’; third-level themes ‘General talent management issues/General approach/strategy’ and ‘General talent management issues/Policy developments’ were upgraded to level two.

Merging second-level themes: Two second-level themes, ‘Policy developments’ and ‘Policies’ under ‘General talent management issues’ were merged into one ‘Policy developments’ to get rid of potential redundancies. The new theme would capture any changes to policies on talent management.

Downgrading second-level theme to third level: ‘General talent management issues/Resistance’ was downgraded to fall under ‘General difficulties’ and become ‘General talent management issues/General difficulties/Resistance’.

Inserting third-level themes under ‘General approach’: In order to capture views on whether the university generally buys or grows talent, two third-level themes ‘General talent management issues/General approach/Growing talent’ and ‘General talent management issues/General approach/Buying talent’ were added.

Inserting third and fourth-level themes under ‘General talent management issues/Leadership’: ‘General talent management issues/Leadership/Academic leadership’, ‘General talent management issues/Leadership/Academic leadership/In the past’ and ‘General talent management issues/Leadership/Academic leadership/These days’ were added to reflect opinion on academic leadership over time.

Moving second-level theme to a different top-level theme: ‘Talent development/Bonding’ was moved to ‘Talent retention/Bonding’ because the idea behind bonding is that staff returning from “study leave” are retained by the university for a minimum period.

Unclassified theme: ‘A.O.B/Political leadership’ was created to capture the role of political leaders who are not involved in day-to-day running of the university.

Modified template: Version 2

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background information <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Career path of participants 1.2. University history 2. General talent management issues <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. General approach <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1.1. Growing talent 2.1.2. Buying talent 2.2. Policy developments 2.3. Leadership <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.3.1. Qualifications and experience 2.3.2. Academic leadership <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.3.2.1. In the past 2.3.2.2. These days 2.4. Systems and structures 2.5. Financing/funding 2.6. General difficulties <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.6.1. Resistance 3. Definition of talent <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Qualifications 3.2. Attributes 3.3. Classification <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3.1. Inclusive understanding of talent 3.3.2. Exclusive understanding of talent <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3.2.1. Academics 3.3.2.2. Other staff 3.3.2.3. Students 3.4. Whose definition of talent is it? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.4.1. Participant definition 3.4.2. What participant thinks is university definition. 4. Talent identification <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Processes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1.1. Earmarking 4.1.2. Responses to adverts 4.2. Standards/requirements | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.3. Difficulties 5. Talent development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1. Training 5.2. Other activities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.2.1. Mentorship 5.2.2. Exposure 5.2.3. Induction 5.3. Location 5.4. Funding 6. Talent retention <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1. Policies 6.2. Rewards <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6.2.1. Remuneration 6.2.2. Promotion 6.3. Conditions of service 6.4. Work environment 6.5. Recognition 6.6. Talent visibility 6.7. Bonding 6.8. Problems 7. Organisational characteristics <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7.1. Culture/climate/traditions 7.2. Management style 7.3. Ownership <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7.3.1. Public 7.3.2. Private 7.3.3. Religious 8. Other universities/competitors <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1. National 8.2. Regional 8.3. Global 8.4. Other sectors <p>B. Responsibility (INTEGRATIVE THEME)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. A.O.B <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9.1. Political leadership |
|---|---|

Modified Template Version 3

Further coding and analysis led to modification of Version 2 template. Changes that were effected to this version were largely additions of a number of codes as described below, leading to Version 3 of the coding template.

Inserting third level themes: In order to capture the wide range of what participants perceived as general difficulties, three third level themes were inserted as follows: ‘General talent management issues/General difficulties/Time constraints’, ‘General talent management issues/General difficulties/Lack of management’s support’ and ‘General talent management issues/General difficulties/Communication problems’.

Another third level theme was added to contain views on the actual selection or recruitment process: ‘Talent identification/Processes/Selection process’.

Inserting second level theme: A second level theme ‘General talent management issues/No talent management programme’ was inserted to represent sentiments that that university had no existing TM programme, as one participant’s quote below exemplifies,

I don’t think that we have, as college or as a university, worried about a talent management strategy

Other second level themes were inserted as follows: ‘Talent retention/No retention’ in order to capture the idea that the university does not take deliberate efforts to retain talents, ‘AOB/Gender’, ‘AOB/University status’, ‘AOB/The future of talent management’.

With regards to ‘Talent retention/No retention’ one participant had this to say,

The university doesn’t have retention. If somebody wants to move they allow you to move, ..., I will go to another university, there is no follow-up, ..., nobody persuades you to stay, ... I wouldn’t say there is retention policy...

Modified template: Version 3

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Background information | 2.3.2.2. These days |
| 1.1. Career path of participants | 2.4. Systems and structures |
| 1.2. University history | 2.5. Financing/funding |
| 2. General talent management issues | 2.6. General difficulties |
| 2.1. General approach | 2.6.1. Resistance |
| 2.1.1. Growing talent | 2.6.2. Time constraints |
| 2.1.2. Buying talent | 2.6.3. Lack of management’s support |
| 2.2. Policy developments | 2.6.4. Communication problems |
| 2.3. Leadership | 2.7. No talent management programme |
| 2.3.1. Qualifications and experience | 3. Definition of talent |
| 2.3.2. Academic leadership | |
| 2.3.2.1. In the past | |

- 3.1. Qualifications
- 3.2. Attributes
- 3.3. Classification
 - 3.3.1. Inclusive understanding of talent
 - 3.3.2. Exclusive understanding of talent
 - 3.3.2.1. Academics
 - 3.3.2.2. Other staff
 - 3.3.2.3. Students
- 3.4. Whose definition of talent is it?
 - 3.4.1. Participant definition
 - 3.4.2. What participant thinks is university definition.
- 4. Talent identification
 - 4.1. Processes
 - 4.1.1. Earmarking
 - 4.1.2. Responses to adverts
 - 4.1.3. Selection process
 - 4.2. Standards/requirements
 - 4.3. Difficulties
- 5. Talent development
 - 5.1. Training
 - 5.2. Other activities
 - 5.2.1. Mentorship
 - 5.2.2. Exposure
 - 5.2.3. Induction
 - 5.3. Location
 - 5.4. Funding
- 6. Talent retention
 - 6.1. Policies
 - 6.2. Rewards
 - 6.2.1. Remuneration
 - 6.2.2. Promotion
- 6.3. Conditions of service
- 6.4. Work environment
- 6.5. Recognition
- 6.6. Talent visibility
- 6.7. Bonding
- 6.8. Problems
- 6.9. No retention
- 7. Organisational characteristics
 - 7.1. Culture/climate/traditions
 - 7.2. Management style
 - 7.3. Ownership
 - 7.3.1. Public
 - 7.3.2. Private
 - 7.3.3. Religious
- 8. Other universities/competitors
 - 8.1. National
 - 8.2. Regional
 - 8.3. Global
 - 8.4. Other sectors
- C. Responsibility (INTEGRATIVE THEME)
- 9. A.O.B
 - 9.1. Political leadership
 - 9.2. Gender
 - 9.3. University status
 - 9.4. The future of talent management

Modified Template Version 4

Further coding and analysis led to modification of Version 3 template to include insertions of levels two, three and four themes as shown below.

Level 2 themes: ‘Definition of talent/Understanding of talent is evolving’, ‘Talent retention/Opportunities to do own things’, ‘Talent retention/Patriotism’ and ‘Talent retention/Status of the university’.

Level three themes: ‘Talent development/Other activities/Continuous professional development’, and ‘Talent development/Other activities/Leadership development’.

Level four theme: ‘General talent management issues/Leadership/Academic leadership/Authority’.

It should be mentioned that level two theme ‘Talent retention/Status of the university’ is appearing twice because in this second instance it is coming out as either an aspect that attracts or retains talents within the national level academic labour market. As one senior academic put it,

We will attract mediocrity, people who don't even know why they are working, people who will come to us because it's prestigious to be in (this) university without understanding what it takes to be an academic

In the first instance that second level theme ‘AOB/University status’ appears, the idea is to capture the broad spectrum of status which could relate to expression of ranking at the global level.

At this stage of template modification it was determined that version four becomes the final template as it captured the most of the themes in the transcripts across the cases.

Modified template: Version 4

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background information <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Career path of participants 1.2. University history 2. General talent management issues <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. General approach <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1.1. Growing talent 2.1.2. Buying talent 2.2. Policy developments 2.3. Leadership <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.3.1. Qualifications and experience 2.3.2. Academic leadership <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.3.2.1. Authority 2.3.2.2. In the past 2.3.2.3. These days 2.4. Systems and structures 2.5. Financing/funding 2.6. General difficulties <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.6.1. Resistance 2.6.2. Time constraints 2.6.3. Lack of management's support 2.6.4. Communication problems 2.7. No talent management programme 3. Definition of talent <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Qualifications 3.2. Attributes | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3. Classification <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3.1. Inclusive understanding of talent 3.3.2. Exclusive understanding of talent <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3.2.1. Academics 3.3.2.2. Other staff 3.3.2.3. Students 3.4. Whose definition of talent is it? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.4.1. Participant definition 3.4.2. What participant thinks is university definition. 3.5. Understanding of talent is evolving <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Talent identification <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Processes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1.1. Earmarking 4.1.2. Responses to adverts 4.1.3. Selection process 4.2. Standards/requirements 4.3. Difficulties 5. Talent development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1. Training 5.2. Other activities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.2.1. Mentorship 5.2.2. Exposure 5.2.3. Induction |
|---|---|

- 5.2.4. Continuous professional development
- 5.2.5. Leadership development
- 5.3. Location
- 5.4. Funding
- 6. Talent retention
 - 6.1. Policies
 - 6.2. Rewards
 - 6.2.1. Remuneration
 - 6.2.2. Promotion
 - 6.3. Conditions of service
 - 6.4. Work environment
 - 6.5. Recognition
 - 6.6. Talent visibility
 - 6.7. Bonding
 - 6.8. Problems
 - 6.9. No retention
 - 6.10. Opportunities to do own things
 - 6.11. Patriotism
 - 6.12. Status of university
- 7. Organisational characteristics
 - 7.1. Culture/climate/traditions
 - 7.2. Management style
 - 7.3. Ownership
 - 7.3.1. Public
 - 7.3.2. Private
 - 7.3.3. Religious
- 8. Other universities/competitors
 - 8.1. National
 - 8.2. Regional
 - 8.3. Global
 - 8.4. Other sectors
- D. Responsibility (INTEGRATIVE THEME)
- 9. A.O.B
 - 9.1. Political leadership
 - 9.2. Gender
 - 9.3. University status
 - 9.4. The future of talent management

Appendix D1: Case A's template in InVivo

The screenshot displays the InVivo software interface for a project titled "Talent Management in UNIMA.nvp - Nivo". The interface is divided into several sections:

- Top Menu:** Includes File, Home, Create, External Data, Analyze, Query, Explore, Layout, and View.
- Left Sidebar:** Contains navigation options for Nodes, Relationships, and Node Matrices, along with a list of tool categories: Sources, Nodes (selected), Classifications, Collections, Queries, Reports, Models, and Folders.
- Main Content Area:** Shows a hierarchical tree of nodes on the left and a corresponding table on the right. The table lists node names, their source counts, reference counts, and creation dates.

Table 1: Node Summary (Top View)

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By
Time constraints	2	2	23/08/2015 17:50	EJ
Leadership	12	82	14/08/2015 12:21	EJ
Academic leadership	12	48	14/08/2015 12:22	EJ
Authority	9	19	26/08/2015 11:53	EJ
In the past	7	16	14/08/2015 12:22	EJ
These days	6	13	14/08/2015 12:22	EJ
Qualifications and experience	12	34	14/08/2015 12:21	EJ
No talent management programme	9	14	23/08/2015 17:49	EJ
Policy developments	13	60	14/08/2015 12:21	EJ
Systems and structures	15	94	14/08/2015 12:23	EJ
Organizational characteristics	14	111	14/08/2015 12:42	EJ
Culture climate or traditions	13	80	14/08/2015 12:42	EJ
Management style	6	15	14/08/2015 12:43	EJ
Ownership	9	16	14/08/2015 12:43	EJ
Private	0	0	14/08/2015 12:43	EJ
Public	9	16	14/08/2015 12:43	EJ
Religious	0	0	14/08/2015 12:43	EJ
Other universities and competitors	16	136	14/08/2015 12:44	EJ
Global	15	28	14/08/2015 12:45	EJ
National	10	29	14/08/2015 12:44	EJ
Other sectors	10	20	14/08/2015 12:45	EJ
Regional	14	59	14/08/2015 12:45	EJ
Responsibility INTEGRATIVE	13	112	14/08/2015 12:46	EJ
Talent development	14	131	14/08/2015 12:34	EJ
Funding	10	25	14/08/2015 12:36	EJ
Location	9	15	14/08/2015 12:36	EJ
Other activities	13	54	14/08/2015 12:36	EJ
Continuous professional development	2	3	25/08/2015 19:12	EJ
Exposure	7	21	14/08/2015 12:36	EJ
Induction	6	9	14/08/2015 12:36	EJ
Leadership development	5	6	25/08/2015 19:14	EJ
Mentorship	9	15	14/08/2015 12:35	EJ
Training	11	34	14/08/2015 12:35	EJ
Talent identification	14	125	14/08/2015 12:31	EJ
Difficulties	11	23	14/08/2015 12:33	EJ

Table 2: Node Summary (Bottom View)

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By
AQB	0	0	14/08/2015 12:46	EJ
Gender	1	1	23/08/2015 17:52	EJ
Political leadership	9	37	14/08/2015 12:47	EJ
The future of talent management	13	41	23/08/2015 17:52	EJ
University status	9	24	23/08/2015 17:52	EJ
Background information	14	57	14/08/2015 12:17	EJ
Career path of participants	14	37	14/08/2015 12:18	EJ
University history	7	20	14/08/2015 12:18	EJ
Definition of talent	14	145	14/08/2015 12:25	EJ
Attributes	8	27	14/08/2015 12:26	EJ
Classification	13	59	14/08/2015 12:26	EJ
Exclusive understanding of talent	13	51	14/08/2015 12:27	EJ
Academics	12	23	14/08/2015 12:27	EJ
Other staff	8	14	14/08/2015 12:27	EJ
Students	9	13	14/08/2015 12:27	EJ
Inclusive understanding of talent	6	8	14/08/2015 12:26	EJ
Qualifications	11	22	14/08/2015 12:26	EJ
Understanding of talent is evolving	3	9	14/08/2015 19:09	EJ
Whose definition of talent	12	28	14/08/2015 12:28	EJ
Participant definition	10	15	14/08/2015 12:29	EJ
What participant thinks is university definition	9	13	14/08/2015 12:29	EJ
General talent management issues	16	422	14/08/2015 12:19	EJ
Financing	12	45	14/08/2015 12:24	EJ
General approach	12	49	14/08/2015 12:20	EJ
Buying talent	8	11	14/08/2015 12:20	EJ
Growing talent	12	38	14/08/2015 12:20	EJ
General difficulties	14	78	14/08/2015 12:24	EJ
Communication problems	6	17	23/08/2015 17:51	EJ
Lack of management support	6	16	23/08/2015 17:50	EJ
Resistance	13	43	14/08/2015 12:24	EJ
Time constraints	2	2	23/08/2015 17:50	EJ
Leadership	12	82	14/08/2015 12:21	EJ
Academic leadership	12	48	14/08/2015 12:22	EJ
Authority	9	19	26/08/2015 11:53	EJ
In the past	7	16	14/08/2015 12:22	EJ

Talent Management in UNBMA.rnp - Nivo

File Home Create External Data Analyze Query Explore Layout View

Go Refresh Open Properties Edit Paste Copy Merge Clipboard Format Paragraph Styles

Reset Settings Select Text Region Find Replace Delete Spelling

Workspace Item

Look for Search In Nodes Find Now Clear Advanced Find

Nodes Relationships Node Members

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By
Talent identification	14	125	14/08/2015 12:31	EJ
Difficulties	11	23	14/08/2015 12:33	EJ
Processes	12	75	14/08/2015 12:32	EJ
Earning	9	21	14/08/2015 12:32	EJ
Response to adverts	10	15	14/08/2015 12:32	EJ
Selection process	11	39	20/08/2015 15:25	EJ
Standards and requirements	11	27	14/08/2015 12:33	EJ
Talent retention	15	247	14/08/2015 12:37	EJ
Bonding	2	3	14/08/2015 12:41	EJ
Conditions of service	14	44	14/08/2015 12:38	EJ
No retention	4	5	20/08/2015 20:59	EJ
Opportunities for doing own things	5	12	26/08/2015 11:31	EJ
Patronism	4	4	14/09/2015 10:15	EJ
Policies	8	16	14/08/2015 12:37	EJ
Problems	11	48	14/08/2015 12:41	EJ
Recognition	6	11	14/08/2015 12:41	EJ
Rewards	11	38	14/08/2015 12:38	EJ
Promotion	10	12	14/08/2015 12:38	EJ
Remuneration	9	26	14/08/2015 12:38	EJ
Status of university	5	9	15/09/2015 09:27	EJ
Talent visibility	6	16	14/08/2015 12:41	EJ
Work environment	12	41	14/08/2015 12:40	EJ

Sources

Appendix D2: Case B's template in InVivo

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By
Organizational characteristics	0	0	16/10/2015 18:16	EJ
Ownership	0	0	16/10/2015 18:17	EJ
Private	0	0	16/10/2015 18:17	EJ
Public	0	0	16/10/2015 18:18	EJ
Religious	10	22	16/10/2015 18:18	EJ
Management style	7	10	16/10/2015 18:17	EJ
Culture climate or traditions	9	30	16/10/2015 18:17	EJ
Other universities and competitors	0	0	16/10/2015 18:19	EJ
Global	1	2	16/10/2015 18:18	EJ
Regional	3	4	16/10/2015 18:19	EJ
Other sectors	3	6	16/10/2015 18:19	EJ
National	11	48	16/10/2015 18:19	EJ
Job	1	1	13/10/2015 18:15	EJ
Gender	0	0	13/10/2015 18:16	EJ
Political leadership	2	3	13/10/2015 18:16	EJ
University status	9	19	13/10/2015 18:17	EJ
The future of talent management	9	28	13/10/2015 18:16	EJ
Definition of talent	8	14	13/10/2015 18:18	EJ
Classification	0	0	13/10/2015 18:18	EJ
Inclusive understanding of talent	4	5	13/10/2015 18:20	EJ
Exclusive understanding of talent	8	15	13/10/2015 18:19	EJ
Students	0	0	13/10/2015 18:19	EJ
Other staff	6	6	13/10/2015 18:19	EJ
Academics	7	9	13/10/2015 18:19	EJ
Understanding of talent is evolving	0	0	13/10/2015 18:21	EJ
Who's definition of talent	0	0	13/10/2015 18:22	EJ
Participant definition	6	7	13/10/2015 18:23	EJ
What participant thinks is university definition	6	7	13/10/2015 18:23	EJ
Qualifications	2	3	13/10/2015 18:20	EJ
Attributes	8	9	13/10/2015 18:18	EJ
Responsibility INTEGRATIVE	11	53	16/10/2015 18:19	EJ
Background information	11	54	13/10/2015 18:16	EJ
University history	7	13	13/10/2015 18:17	EJ
Career path of participants	11	41	13/10/2015 18:17	EJ
Talent development	11	54	16/10/2015 18:20	EJ

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By
Career path of participants	11	41	13/10/2015 18:17	EJ
Talent development	11	54	16/10/2015 18:20	EJ
Location	4	7	16/10/2015 18:20	EJ
Training	8	10	16/10/2015 18:23	EJ
Funding	8	13	16/10/2015 18:20	EJ
Other activities	11	23	16/10/2015 18:20	EJ
Leadership development	0	0	16/10/2015 18:21	EJ
Mentorship	1	1	16/10/2015 18:23	EJ
Exposure	2	2	16/10/2015 18:21	EJ
Induction	7	8	16/10/2015 18:21	EJ
Continuous professional development	10	12	16/10/2015 18:20	EJ
Talent identification	11	56	16/10/2015 18:24	EJ
Difficulties	2	4	16/10/2015 18:24	EJ
Standards and requirements	8	12	16/10/2015 18:25	EJ
Processes	10	40	16/10/2015 18:24	EJ
Examining	2	3	16/10/2015 18:25	EJ
Response to adverts	6	8	16/10/2015 18:25	EJ
Selection process	9	29	16/10/2015 18:25	EJ
General talent management issues	12	70	16/10/2015 18:11	EJ
General approach	0	0	16/10/2015 18:12	EJ
Growing talent	0	0	16/10/2015 18:14	EJ
Buying talent	2	3	16/10/2015 18:14	EJ
General difficulties	0	0	16/10/2015 18:12	EJ
Time constraints	2	2	16/10/2015 18:15	EJ
Communication problems	2	3	16/10/2015 18:14	EJ
Resistance	2	5	16/10/2015 18:15	EJ
Lack of management support	4	10	16/10/2015 18:15	EJ
Leadership	0	0	16/10/2015 18:12	EJ
Qualifications and experience	9	14	16/10/2015 18:16	EJ
Academic leadership	9	24	16/10/2015 18:15	EJ
Policy developments	6	7	16/10/2015 18:13	EJ
No talent management programme	7	9	16/10/2015 18:13	EJ
Financing	11	26	16/10/2015 18:12	EJ
Systems and structures	10	28	16/10/2015 18:13	EJ
Talent retention	11	92	16/10/2015 18:26	EJ

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By
Systems and structures	10	28	16/10/2015 18:13	EJ
Talent retention	11	92	16/10/2015 18:26	EJ
Rewards	10	0	16/10/2015 18:28	EJ
Promotion	4	14	16/10/2015 18:28	EJ
Remuneration	11	30	16/10/2015 18:29	EJ
Recognition	1	1	16/10/2015 18:28	EJ
Bonding	1	2	16/10/2015 18:26	EJ
Police	3	3	16/10/2015 18:28	EJ
Talent visibility	3	4	16/10/2015 18:29	EJ
Patriotism	3	5	16/10/2015 18:27	EJ
Opportunities for doing own things	3	6	16/10/2015 18:27	EJ
Status of university	5	8	16/10/2015 18:29	EJ
Work environment	7	12	16/10/2015 18:29	EJ
No retention	6	14	16/10/2015 18:27	EJ
Problems	9	15	16/10/2015 18:28	EJ
Conditions of service	10	22	16/10/2015 18:27	EJ

Appendix D3: Case C's template in InVivo

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By
Other universities and competitors	3	26	28/01/2016 19:38	EJ
Global	0	0	28/01/2016 19:55	EJ
Regional	2	2	28/01/2016 19:56	EJ
Other sectors	3	3	28/01/2016 19:55	EJ
National	7	21	28/01/2016 19:55	EJ
Responsibility INTEGRATIVE	9	29	28/01/2016 19:56	EJ
ACB	9	31	28/01/2016 19:41	EJ
Gender	0	0	28/01/2016 19:41	EJ
Political leadership	0	0	28/01/2016 19:41	EJ
University status	4	15	28/01/2016 19:42	EJ
The future of talent management	9	16	28/01/2016 19:41	EJ
Talent identification	9	35	28/01/2016 19:58	EJ
Difficulties	1	2	28/01/2016 19:59	EJ
Standards and requirements	2	2	28/01/2016 20:00	EJ
Processes	9	31	28/01/2016 19:59	EJ
Emarking	2	2	28/01/2016 19:59	EJ
Responses to adverts	4	4	28/01/2016 19:59	EJ
Selection process	9	25	28/01/2016 19:59	EJ
Background information	9	42	28/01/2016 19:42	EJ
University history	3	5	28/01/2016 19:42	EJ
Career path of participants	9	37	28/01/2016 19:42	EJ
Talent development	9	45	28/01/2016 19:56	EJ
Location	2	2	28/01/2016 19:57	EJ
Funding	6	8	28/01/2016 19:57	EJ
Training	9	11	28/01/2016 19:58	EJ
Other activities	8	22	28/01/2016 19:57	EJ
Leadership development	0	0	28/01/2016 19:58	EJ
Exposure	3	3	28/01/2016 19:57	EJ
Induction	3	3	28/01/2016 19:57	EJ
Membership	2	3	28/01/2016 19:58	EJ
Continuous professional development	6	11	28/01/2016 19:57	EJ
Definition of talent	9	46	28/01/2016 19:43	EJ
Understanding of talent is evolving	0	0	28/01/2016 19:46	EJ
Qualifications	3	3	28/01/2016 19:45	EJ
Attributes	6	7	28/01/2016 19:43	EJ
Vilrose definition of talent	8	15	28/01/2016 19:46	EJ
Participant definition	6	6	28/01/2016 19:46	EJ

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By
Continuous professional development	6	11	28/01/2016 19:57	EJ
Definition of talent	9	46	28/01/2016 19:43	EJ
Understanding of talent is evolving	0	0	28/01/2016 19:46	EJ
Qualifications	3	3	28/01/2016 19:45	EJ
Attributes	6	7	28/01/2016 19:43	EJ
Vilrose definition of talent	8	15	28/01/2016 19:46	EJ
Participant definition	6	6	28/01/2016 19:46	EJ
What participant thinks is university definition	7	9	28/01/2016 19:47	EJ
Classification	8	21	28/01/2016 19:44	EJ
Inclusive understanding of talent	4	6	28/01/2016 19:45	EJ
Exclusive understanding of talent	6	15	28/01/2016 19:44	EJ
Students	2	4	28/01/2016 19:44	EJ
Academics	4	5	28/01/2016 19:44	EJ
Other staff	5	5	28/01/2016 19:44	EJ
Organizational characteristics	9	60	28/01/2016 19:53	EJ
Management style	6	14	28/01/2016 19:54	EJ
Culture climate or traditions	7	22	28/01/2016 19:53	EJ
Ownership	9	24	28/01/2016 19:54	EJ
Public	0	0	28/01/2016 19:54	EJ
Religious	0	0	28/01/2016 19:54	EJ
Private	9	24	28/01/2016 19:54	EJ
General talent management issues	9	102	28/01/2016 19:47	EJ
No talent management	2	5	28/01/2016 19:52	EJ
General approach	5	10	28/01/2016 19:48	EJ
Growing talent	1	1	28/01/2016 19:48	EJ
Buying talent	4	9	28/01/2016 19:48	EJ
Policy developments	5	10	28/01/2016 19:52	EJ
General difficulties	7	13	28/01/2016 19:49	EJ
Resistance	0	0	28/01/2016 19:50	EJ
Time constraints	2	2	28/01/2016 19:50	EJ
Communication problems	3	4	28/01/2016 19:49	EJ
Lack of management support	3	7	28/01/2016 19:49	EJ
Leadership	6	15	28/01/2016 19:50	EJ
Qualifications and experience	3	5	28/01/2016 19:52	EJ
Academic leadership	5	10	28/01/2016 19:50	EJ
in the past	0	0	28/01/2016 19:51	EJ

Workspace					
Item	Clipboard	Format	Paragraph	Styles	Editing
Look for: Search In: Nodes Find Now Clear Advanced Find					
Nodes					
Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	
Communication problems	3	4	28/01/2016 19:49	EJ	
Lack of management support	3	7	28/01/2016 19:49	EJ	
Leadership	6	15	28/01/2016 19:50	EJ	
Qualifications and experience	3	5	28/01/2016 19:52	EJ	
Academic leadership	5	10	28/01/2016 19:50	EJ	
In the past	0	0	28/01/2016 19:51	EJ	
These days	1	1	28/01/2016 19:51	EJ	
Authority	5	9	28/01/2016 19:51	EJ	
Financing	8	17	28/01/2016 19:48	EJ	
Systems and structures	7	32	28/01/2016 19:52	EJ	
Talent retention	10	138	28/01/2016 20:00	EJ	
Bonding	0	0	28/01/2016 20:00	EJ	
Paternalism	0	0	28/01/2016 20:01	EJ	
Recognition	3	4	28/01/2016 20:02	EJ	
Status of university	3	5	28/01/2016 20:02	EJ	
Problems	5	8	28/01/2016 20:02	EJ	
Policies	5	9	28/01/2016 20:01	EJ	
Work environment	4	10	28/01/2016 20:03	EJ	
Talent visibility	6	11	28/01/2016 20:03	EJ	
No retention	5	13	28/01/2016 20:01	EJ	
Opportunities for doing own things	6	16	28/01/2016 20:01	EJ	
Conditions of service	10	22	28/01/2016 20:01	EJ	
Rewards	8	35	28/01/2016 20:02	EJ	
Promotion	4	16	28/01/2016 20:02	EJ	
Remuneration	7	17	28/01/2016 20:02	EJ	

Appendix E: Participant information sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of a PhD programme the aim of which is to explore talent management practices, challenges and prospects in Malawian universities. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Who will conduct the research?

Edister S. Jamu, Leeds University Business School, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, United Kingdom.

Title of the Research

Talent management in Malawian universities: Practices, challenges and prospects.

What is the aim of the research?

By conducting this study we hope to gain better understanding of the influences of organisational practices on recruitment, development and retention of academic members of staff. This arose out of the realisation that Malawian universities face competition for its academics from institutions within and outside the country. Elsewhere, talent management has proved to be a major source of competitive advantage for organisations. In view of the above, exploring practices in the context of Malawian universities could be the beginning of gaining a competitive edge.

Why have you been chosen?

You have been invited to participation because you are either in leadership/managerial position or current member of staff or former member of staff. We believe that you can make a contribution towards a discussion of practices that influence recruitment, development and retention of academics. Other members from your institution will have participated by the end of the study. Other participants will be drawn from two other institutions.

What would you be asked to do if you took part?

Your involvement in the study entails being interviewed by the researcher for about one-and-half hours. The interviews will be recorded. We do not anticipate any risks, pain or discomfort arising out of your participation.

What happens to the data collected?

The interviews will be transcribed and analysed as part of PhD study. Identifying information will not be included in the transcripts. Transcripts will be accessed by the researcher and the supervisory team only.

How is confidentiality maintained?

Transcribed data will be kept separate from personal identifiers. All electronic data will be password protected or encrypted. Paper based transcripts or documents will be kept in locked cabinets. All information related to the study will be kept for a maximum of 5 years, after which they will be destroyed by shredding, deletion or other appropriate means.

What happens if you do not want to take part or if you change your mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time during the interview or soon after the interview is completed without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

Will you be paid for participating in the research?

Participation in the study is voluntary such that no payment or compensation is paid for your time.

What is the duration of the research?

The interview is scheduled to last approximately one-and-half hours.

Where will the research be conducted?

Where possible the interview will take place within your university premise. Where this is not possible, we request that you indicate your preferred venue, which should have minimal distractions.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

Findings from this study will form part of a PhD thesis. Dissemination will be by way of publications or conference/seminar presentations. In each case, any direct quotes reported from interviews will be disidentified.

Who has reviewed the research project?

The project has been reviewed by the Leeds University Business School.

Contact for further information

If you need further details please contact either the researcher or supervisory team:

Researcher: Edister Jamu (bnesj@leeds.ac.uk or edisterj@yahoo.co.uk)

Supervisor: Prof. Catherine Cassell (c.cassell@leeds.ac.uk)

Appendix F: Informed consent

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

Please initial box

1.	I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.	
2.	I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to any treatment/service.	
3.	I understand that the interviews will be audio - recorded	
4.	I agree to the use of anonymous quotes	

I agree to take part in the above project

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of person witnessing consent	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____