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Leadership talent mindset as a catalyst for talent management and talent retention: The case of a Botswana local government institution

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Orientation: Talented employees play an essential role in the service performance of local government institutions. Unfortunately, talent management remains a neglected practice within the local government, mainly because of the absence of leadership talent mindsets.

Research purpose: The main focus of this research study was to determine how leadership talent mindset influences talent management and voluntary turnover intentions of employees in a Botswana local government institution.

Motivation for the study: Research on the predictive relationships between leadership talent mindset, talent management and voluntary turnover intentions is yet forthcoming in the Botswana context.

Research approach/design and method: The researchers followed a quantitative research approach. Data were collected from a stratified random sample of employees (N = 405) from a Botswana local government institution. A leadership talent mindset scale, talent management measurements and voluntary turnover intentions questionnaire were administered.

Main findings: The results showed a weak leadership talent mindset towards talent management. A leadership talent mindset significantly predicted poor talent management practices and voluntary turnover intentions. Talent development moderated the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions.

Practical/managerial implications: Leaders need to adopt the appropriate talent mindsets to implement those talent management practices that will retain key and competent talent in local government institutions.

Contribution/value-add: This research study advances empirical knowledge on the importance of leadership in facilitating effective talent management in local government.

Keywords: developing countries; leadership talent mindset; local government, talent management, voluntary turnover intentions.

Introduction

The importance of talented employees in the service performance of public sector institutions is well documented (Kravariti, Tasoulis, Scullion, & Alali, 2022). According to Keller and Meaney (2017), superior talent is up to eight times more productive than average employees. As such, an investment in talent is imperative to achieve the strategic aims and purpose of the public sector: improved goods and services for the community (Izard-Carroll, 2016; Lee, 2021). Al Rina and Atan (2020) maintain that institutions are more likely to achieve sustainable organisational performance when managing their human capital effectively and efficiently. Public sector leaders should arguably support those employees who can provide effective and efficient performance (Thomas, 2015; Thunissen & Buttiens, 2017). Therefore, leadership should commit to talent management and align talent imperatives with institutional goals (Karthikvel & Samydoss, 2019). Public sector institutions, however, seem to adopt more reactive approaches toward talent management (Mello & Makamu, 2021) and could face drastic talent shortages as the competition for scarce skills increases (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). Mey, Poisat and Stindt (2021) postulate that enabling leadership behaviours and practices are essential to engage and retain workplace talent.

The main focus of this research study was to determine how the leadership talent mindset influences talent management and the voluntary turnover intentions of employees in a Botswana

local government institution. More specifically, we explored the following:

- What is the current leadership talent mindset in a Botswana local government institution?
- To what extent does the current leadership talent mindset influence talent management in a Botswana local government institution?
- To what extent does the current leadership talent mindset influence the voluntary turnover intentions of employees in a Botswana local government institution?
- To what extent does talent management influence the voluntary turnover intentions of employees in a Botswana local government institution?
- Does talent management moderate or mediate the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions of employees in a Botswana local government institution?

According to Muyia, Welkullo and Fredrick (2018), talent management is essential for emerging markets such as Botswana, where countries rely on scarce and critical skills for economic sustainability and competitiveness. Currently, there is no consensus on talent management practices or models that can guide the effective implementation of talent management in local government institutions, albeit the strategic importance thereof (Luna-Arocas & Lara, 2020). This leaves policymakers with few options and guidelines for optimising and managing talented employees for local government sustainability and service performance (Mabope, 2018). Therefore, it is not surprising that the Global Competitiveness Report ranks sub-Saharan African countries poorly in human capital development (Schwab & Zahidi, 2020). Moreover, the need exists for more leadership prominence and competence in African enterprises that can drive the sustainable goals and vision for the continent through talent (Cheteni & Shindika, 2017; Lerutla & Steyn, 2021). Shingenge and Saurombe (2022) mentioned that limited empirical information exists on leadership viewpoints and perceptions regarding local government institutions in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Marobela (2020), the general leadership crises in Africa and Botswana limit organisations from achieving their goals and employees from realising their full potential.

This research study contributes to closing the knowledge gap on talent management research in public sector institutions, especially in emerging markets (Jawali et al., 2021). Most research favours talent management in private sector institutions where talent and its management can be quantified through profits (Kravariti et al., 2022). However, public sector institutions operate in a unique environment and are more rigidly regulated through government regulations than private companies (Kravariti & Johnson, 2020). As a result, many public sector leaders have the daunting task of navigating talent in a third-world workplace environment characterised by bureaucracy, poor infrastructure, budget cuts and corruption (Fillipus & Schultz, 2019; Mello & Makamu, 2021). Therefore, this research also advances contextual knowledge on talent management by considering the work environment in which local government on the African continent, specifically Botswana, operates (Cheteni & Shindika, 2017; Marobela, 2020). An extensive literature review showed limited research on talent management in the Botswana context and its antecedents and outcomes. This research further emphasises the strategic importance of leadership in facilitating effective talent management practice in local government and curbing voluntary turnover because of inadequate talent management.

Next, the literature review is presented on the leadership talent mindset, relevant talent management practices and voluntary turnover within local government institutions. Thereafter, the research design adopted for this study is explained, followed by the results of the study. Finally, this study concludes with a discussion of the results and recommendations for research and practice.

Literature review

Leaders' talent mindset towards talent management

Talent management starts with leadership believing that talented employees are the organisation's most essential and valuable assets and worth investing in (Chandrasekar & Zhao, 2015). The talent mindset is grounded in the positive psychology paradigm and refers to 'the attitudes, beliefs, values and expectations that leaders hold that serve as the foundation of who they are, how they lead and how they interact with a team' (Hussain, 2016, p. 1). Welby-Cooke (2010) validated a talent mindset measure and found that leaders should drive aspects such as talent management strategies, talent acquisition and talent retention practices. Luna-Arocas and Morley (2015) classified talent mindset competence in terms of organisational value and goal alignment, management talent mindset, talent application through daily behaviours, talent autonomy and talent development. Mahfoozi et al. (2018) developed and confirmed a four-dimensional model for talent mindset within the public sector, consisting of talent attraction, identification and talent development of positive relationships. Combined, the authors of this study can conclude that a leadership talent mindset is deeply rooted in a person's personality, values and behaviours, which translates into the ability to effectively implement talent management practices.

Talented employees perform best when leaders empower them through continuous career development, succession, inclusivity, participative decision-making and autonomy (see Damer, 2020; Mey et al., 2021; Sadeli, 2012). In addition, talented employees flourish in environments where they can relate to their workplace's leadership vision, mission and strategy (Mokgojwa, 2019). The success of the entire talent management process is thus dependent on the leadership mentality and commitment to the talent management philosophy, policy and practice (Du Plessis, Barkhuizen,

Stanz, & Schutte, 2015). Therefore, government leaders should adopt the appropriate talent mindset and create a sound talent management architecture to achieve institutional and organisational outcomes (Shingenge & Saurombe, 2022).

Applied within the public sector and local government context, the available research shows that the leadership talent mindset still needs to mature (see Mahfoozi, Salajegheh, Ghorbani, Sheikhi, 2018; Mahlahla, 2018; Shingenge & Saurombe, 2022). Public sector leaders appear to have varying perspectives and comprehension of workplace talent management (Shabane, 2017). Leadership talent mindsets should focus on desirable public sector performance and retention (Mahfoozi et al., 2018). Matobako and Barkhuizen (2017) found that a poor leadership talent mindset enhanced the voluntary turnover intentions of junior correctional officials in the South African public sector. A study by Shingenge and Saurombe (2022) showed that leaders who lacked the mindset and commitment towards talented employees adversely impacted the talent management of local government institutions in the Namibian context.

Talent management practices in local government institutions

An extensive review of the literature on talent management within the public sector and local government sector contexts mainly revealed the following six talent management practices: workforce planning, talent acquisition, talent development, talent performance management, talent compensation and talent retention strategies. The following section presents an overview of these practices and their relevance to the public sector and local government institutions.

Workforce planning

According to the resource-based view of talent management, a workplace's direct source of competitive advantage lies in its intangible internal assets, namely talent (Davis & Simpson, 2017). Talented individuals in this context are characterised by value, rareness and inimitability (Tetik, 2016). The ongoing 'war' for scarce talent requires local government institutions to be more proactive in anticipating and planning their future workforce resource needs (Stuss, 2020). Workforce planning ensures that well-resourced employees are recruited to perform the required community duties for local municipalities (2018). Al-Qudah, Obeidat, Shrouf and Abusweilem (2020) found that strategic human resource planning enhances public sector productivity, employee satisfaction and reputation, whilst also reducing operating costs. In contrast, neglected human resource planning contributes to a lack of expertise and subsequently poor performance in local government institutions (Moyo, 2015).

Organisations should forecast future talent demand and workforce supply to ensure sustainable performance (Moheb-Alizadeh & Handfield, 2017). According to Theys and Schultz (2020), workforce planning interventions in public sector institutions are hampered by shrinking talent pools, isolated emphasis on recruitment and selection and geographical

mobility. Applied within the Botswana context, a study by Seitio-Kgokgwe, Gauld, Hill and Barnett (2016) revealed that the public health sector in Botswana experienced inadequate planning, poor deployment and underutilisation of staff. Molokwane (2019) observed a gradual improvement in workforce planning to ensure that the demand and supply of human resources are met in the designated public sector institutions in order to achieve the National Development goals of Botswana.

Talent acquisition

Talent acquisition is a strategic initiative that identifies, attracts and hires talent to meet organisational needs effectively and efficiently (Parthasarathy & Pingle, 2014). The ability of public sector institutions to attract talent depends on a solid employment brand reputation underpinned by a compelling talent value proposition (Saurombe & Barkhuizen, 2020). The extent to which employees can identify themselves with local government institutions in particular is a powerful indicator of their brand strength (Ramgoolam, 2016). According to Leijerholt (2019), employment branding is a neglected practice for local government institutions and requires a more distinctive approach to differentiate themselves as an employer of choice. Mabope's (2018) study revealed that local government institutions' recruitment and selection functions are merely focused on filling vacancies and not on acquiring the necessary skills and competencies. Tetik (2016) advises that organisations should instead follow the appropriate channels to acquire talent. According to Kalav-Idrisoglu (2014), failure by public institutions to recruit the appropriate quantity and quality of human resources results in negative consequences such as poor service delivery and reputational risk. As a result, local government institutions should implement integrated and optimised talent acquisition practices to employ those talents that can strategically contribute to the organisation (Erickson, Lamoureux, & Moulton, 2014).

Talent development

Rapid societal changes and transformations emphasise the importance of local government employees to be equipped with the skills to meet the changing demands of communities (Cloete, 2016). Talent development refers to targeted employee training to prepare them for future organisational activities (Marchington, 2015). Dalayga and Baskaran (2019) view talent development as a method to create solid succession planning instead of talent replacement. In short, talent development involves activities to nurture talent (Bolander, Werr, & Asplund, 2017). According to Acar and Yener (2016), institutions' learning capabilities and strengths are pivotal to creating a high-performance and innovative culture that optimises workplace talent. Mohammed, Hafeez-Baig and Gururajan (2019) assert that talent development contributes to the retention of highly qualified employees, increases brand reputation and improves public sector institutions' cash flow. Two principles guide talent development in local government (Qhibi, 2017). Firstly, the provincial government should continue developing talented and experienced

individuals to keep them up to date with changes in their respective fields. Secondly, the local government should pay special attention to new and inexperienced employees to instil pride in their work. Mashala and Kisumbe (2020) showed that training and development interventions are pivotal to enhancing leadership competence and quality in Tanzanian local government authorities.

Talent performance management

Local government institutions in sub-Saharan Africa are constantly criticised for their inability to meet the service requirements of the broader public (Masiya, Davids & Mangai, 2019). Ndevu and Muller (2018) opine that performance management can be a valuable tool to improve local government service delivery. Although performance management is mandated through various legislative frameworks, local government institutions lack the institutional culture to implement and support performance management systems and practices (Parkies, 2015). Seabi (2020) found various gaps in local government talent management practice, such as poor performance planning and budgeting, incomplete and inaccurate performance reporting and misalignment between strategic and operational performance management activities. Mpabanga (2016) found that a lack of performance monitoring and evaluation skills in Botswana local government institutions and poor supervision, poor conditions of service and a weak work ethic contributed to the ineffective use of performance management systems and tools. According to Smit (2015), effective system, policy and process implementation are critical for improved performance management in local government institutions. Abana and Brenya (2021) further state that performance management in local government can only be effective with leadership support at all levels. A lack of performance recognition is a critical factor contributing to employee turnover (Mngomezulu, Challenor, Munapo, Mashau, & Chikandiwa, 2015).

Talent compensation

According to Makridis (2021), a common perception prevails that government institutions face a severe shortage of skilled workers driven by uncompetitive salaries. Although government jobs in Botswana are considered to provide lucrative and stable employment, they face stiff competition from private for-profit companies in attracting early-career talent who prefer extrinsic rewards (Ng, Gossett, Chinyoka, & Obasi, 2016). Ogony and Majola (2018) found that unsatisfactory salaries are one of the primary reasons employees leave public service departments in South Africa for the private sector. The compensation of employees should therefore become a strategic priority for government institutions if they are to retain scarce skills and remain sustainable (Larkin, 2019). More specifically, Mumbauer et al. (2021) showed that benefit packages (i.e. medical aid, pension and housing allowances) had a more significant effect on job preferences within the South African public health sector compared with salary increases. Salisu (2016) found that employee benefits such as gratuity and benefits greatly influenced employee turnover intentions in the public sector, whereas salaries, combined with gratuity and pension, positively impacted employee attraction. Namweda (2017) revealed that public sector employees opted for better remuneration packages elsewhere with performance-related incentives and market-related remuneration. Performance-based pay and monetary incentives should therefore be considered the cornerstone of public sector managerial reforms (Spano & Monfardini, 2017)

Talent retention strategies

Talent retention has been receiving more attention in recent years because of the costs associated with turnover and the significant loss of productivity (Amushila & Bussin, 2021). According to Traveler (2019), an investment in talent retention, especially talent pipeline development, is imperative in times of economic uncertainty. However, the available research studies show that talent retention strategies are generally neglected in the Southern African public sector institutions and instead dealt with in a reactive manner (Lesenyeho, 2017; Mokgojwa, 2019; Shipena, 2019). A research report by Mzezewa (2019) showed that most municipalities in South Africa lack talent retention policies and cannot retain scarce skills. Bwowe (2015) found that the absence of clearly articulated and integrated talent strategies results in a higher retention rate among municipal employees. Research by Theron (2015) highlighted the importance of having proactive talent retention conversations as a strategy to prevent voluntary turnover intentions. Likewise, Boonbumroongsuk and Rungruang (2022) recommend more effective talent management strategies for better institutional investments in its people.

Voluntary turnover

Voluntary turnover refers to an employee's decision to leave a job of choice (An, 2019). Globally, voluntary turnover intentions amongst public sector employees are escalating at an alarming rate (Gan, Lin, & Wang, 2020; Tran, Nguyen, Nguyen, & Ton, 2020; Wynen, Boon, & Verlinden, 2022). Moreover, work environments are currently characterised by the 'Great Resignation' trend. An extensive study by Sull, Sull and Zweig (2022) showed that toxic workplace cultures cause high voluntary turnover rates, job insecurity and re-organisation, high levels of innovation resulting in overwork, failure to recognise performance and poor response to COVID-19. Employee perceptions of talent management practices and their effectiveness play an essential role in their decision to remain within an organisation (Boonbumroongsuk & Rungruang, 2022; Johennesse & Chou, 2017). Leadership, furthermore, plays an important facilitating role between perceived talent management practice and voluntary turnover in government institutions (Kravariti et al., 2022; Mangisa, Schultz, & Van Hoek, 2020). In addition, talent management practice plays a causal role between organisational talent management culture and the voluntary turnover intentions of local government staff (Masale, 2021).

Towards a hypothesised model for this study

The researchers propose the following hypothesised model for this study, based on the preceding discussion (see Figure 1). The model starts from the premise that the extent to which government leaders adopt a talent mindset can either promote or reduce the perceived effectiveness of talent management practices in the Botswana local government institution (see Damer, 2020; Mey et al., 2021; Sadeli, 2012). Likewise, the leadership talent mindset can either prevent or enhance the voluntary turnover intentions of local government employees (Matobako and Barkhuizen, 2017; Mahfoozi et al., 2018; Shingenge & Saurombe, 2022). Furthermore, talent management practices play a significant role in the decision of employees to remain with a specific organisation (Boonbumroongsuk & Rungruang, 2022; Johennesse & Chou, 2017). Talent management practices (i.e. workforce planning, acquisition, development, performance management, compensation and strategies) can play an intervening role (i.e. mediating or moderating role) between leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover of local government employees (Kravariti et al., 2022; Mangisa, Schultz, & Van Hoek, 2020). It is worth mentioning that research on the moderating or mediating role of talent management is inconclusive as far as the inter-relationships between leadership talent mindset, talent management and voluntary turnover are considered. Therefore, the researchers will test both the moderating and mediating capacity of talent management in the relationship between leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions of local government employees.

The following hypotheses are formulated for this study:

H1: Leadership talent mindset is a significant positive predictor of talent management practices (i.e. workforce planning, talent acquisition, talent development, performance management, compensation and retention strategies).

H2: Leadership talent mindset is a significant negative predictor of voluntary turnover intentions.

H3: Talent management is a significant negative predictor of voluntary turnover intentions.
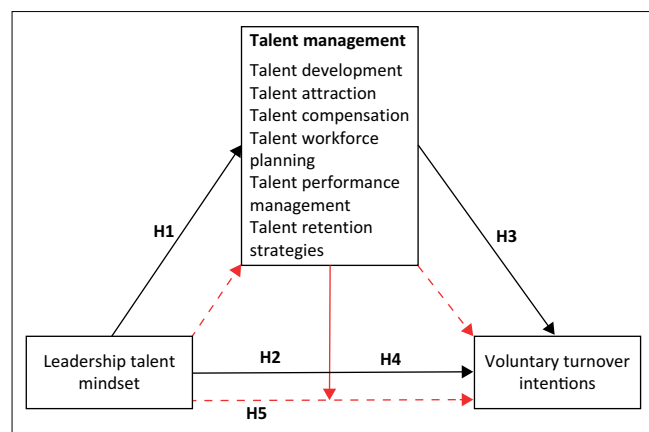
$H_0 4$: Talent management does not moderate the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover.

$H_a 4$: Talent management moderates the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions.

$H_0 5$: Talent management does not mediate the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions.

$H_a 5$: Talent management mediates the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions.

Research approach

The researchers followed a quantitative research approach, using surveys to collect the data. Quantitative research was deemed the most suitable method to answer the research problem posed for this study and test the hypothesised relationships between the identified variables (Sanders, Cogin & Bainbridge, 2014). A cross-sectional research design was used, which is ideal for testing relationships between variables based on data collected at a single point (Field, 2019). This study adheres to the positivist research paradigm. Positivist enquiry generates explanatory associations or causal relationships between phenomena, such as the talent mindset, talent management practices and voluntary turnover intentions in this study (see Bonache & Festing, 2020). The positivist paradigm is therefore well suited to achieve the study's objectives.

Sampling

This study's target population of interest included all employees of a specific town council located within a Botswana local government institution. A total of 650 questionnaires were distributed, of which 405 completed and returned, with a response rate of 62.30%. From the sample descriptions, it was evident that most of them were female respondents (55.3%), with Setswana as their mother tongue (99.8%) and aged between 40 and 49 years (66.4%). The majority of the participants had a certificate or diploma (48.63%) and were employed as operational staff (39.76%). The participants had work experience of 14–29 years (39.76%) and worked between 31 and 40 h per workweek (90.6%). About 71.6% did not have a chance for promotion in the last 5 years.

Measuring instruments

The following measuring instruments were used in this study:

Leadership talent mindset: The researchers developed and adapted a leadership talent mindset scale based on the available literature. The scale is one-dimensional and consists of eight items, such as, '[m]y leader supports my individual career development' and 'I can communicate easily with my leader'. Responses were collected on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree. The scale was distributed to subject matter experts to confirm the content validity. The reliability of the leadership talent mindset measure will be confirmed in this study.

FIGURE 1: Hypothesised model for the study.

Talent management measure: The researchers adapted a talent management questionnaire based on the Human Capital Measure (Human Capital Institute, 2008) and a General Job Characteristics Measure (Barkhuizen, 2005) to assess the most frequently cited talent management practices for local government institutions in the literature. The questionnaire measured six talent management practices with 27 items. Responses were collected on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree. The talent management practices included talent development (five items, such as, '[m]y job offers me opportunities for personal growth and development'), compensation and benefits (four items, such as, 'I am fairly compensated for the work that I do'), talent acquisition (four items, such as, '[m]y organisation can attract top talented employees'), talent performance management (six items, such as, 'I receive sufficient information on the results of my work'), talent workforce planning (four items, such as, '[m]y organisation has forecasted the talent supply and demand for the next two years for my department') and talent retention strategies (four items, such as, '[m]y manager holds frequent retention conversations with staff'). The adapted questionnaire was subjected to a panel of subject experts before distribution in order to ensure face and content validity. The reliability of the adapted talent management questionnaire will be confirmed in this study.

Voluntary turnover intentions: The researchers used the Employee Retention Questionnaire by Cohen (1993) to determine the voluntary turnover intentions of local government employees. The questionnaire measures three items relating to voluntary turnover (e.g. 'I think a lot about leaving the organisation'). Responses were collected on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly disagree (1)' to 'Strongly agree (6)'. Theron (2015) found an excellent reliability of α = 0.914 in a study amongst public sector academics.

Procedure

The accounting officer of the relevant local government institution provided permission to carry out the study. The research was explained to the council management of the local government institution to ensure that all formal procedures were adhered to during data collection. The questionnaire was distributed in hard copy by supervisors and departmental heads to a stratified random set of participants. The questionnaire included an informed consent form to explain the purpose of the study and the safeguarding of participant privacy. Completed questionnaires were returned in a sealed envelope to protect the identity of the participants. Ethical clearance was obtained from North-West University before the commencement of the study. All ethical requirements for scientific research were adhered to during the entire research process.

Data analyses

The data analyses were carried out using SPSS (2022). The SPSS programme used descriptive statistics (i.e. frequencies, means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis), exploratory factor analyses, reliability analyses and linear regression analyses. The researchers used the guidelines of Cohen (1988) of α ≥ 0.70 to establish the reliability of the underlying factors of the measuring instruments. The guidelines of Baron and Kenny (1986) were applied to determine the moderation and mediation effects between leadership talent mindset, talent management and retention. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), moderation analyses consist of four steps: testing the predictive relationships between (1) the predictor and dependent variable; (2) the moderator and dependent variable; (3) the predictor, moderator and dependent variable; and (4) the predictor, moderator, interaction variable (predictor × moderator variable) and dependent variable. All variables are centred on preventing or reducing multicollinearity (Cohen, 2008). Moderation occurs when the interaction variable is significant. Mediation analyses are followed when the moderation analyses are nonsignificant (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The first three steps of the moderation analyses are repeated, with the predictor and dependent variable centred. Complete mediation occurs when the predictive relationship between the independent and dependent variable is nonsignificant after controlling for the mediating variable. Partial mediation occurs when the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is reduced after the mediator is controlled (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Although there are many guidelines for the interpretation of effect sizes, the cut-off points of Cohen (1988) were deemed to be most appropriate for the interpretation of correlation coefficients, $r < 0.1$ – very small; $0.1 \leq r < 0.3$ – small; $0.3 \leq r < 0.5$ – moderate and $r \geq 0.5$ – large.

Ethical considerations

Research ethics clearance was obtained from North-West University (ref. no. NWU00565-19-A4).

Results
Factor and reliability analyses

The measurements used in this study obtained acceptable sample adequacy of above 0.60 as per Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010): leadership talent mindset, 0.874; talent management, 0.951; and turnover intentions, 0.761. The results of the exploratory analyses are reported below.

Leadership talent mindset: The exploratory factor analyses for the leadership talent mindset scale resulted in one factor, with all items showing acceptable loadings. The factor explained 58.272% of the total variance and was labelled leadership talent mindset.

Talent management: The initial theoretical model and measure included talent acquisition as a potential talent management factor. However, the analyses showed various cross-loadings of the four items of talent acquisition with other factors. As a result, the items associated with talent acquisition were omitted from further analyses. A follow-up

exploratory factor analysis using varimax rotation resulted in five factors explaining 80.775%. All items showed acceptable loadings. The five factors were labelled as talent retention strategies (Factor 1), talent development (Factor 2), compensation (Factor 3), performance management (Factor 4) and workforce planning (Factor 5).

Voluntary turnover intentions: The exploratory factor analyses result in one factor for the employee retention measure, labelled as voluntary turnover intentions. The factor explained 85.944% of the total variance, with all items showing acceptable loadings.

The descriptive statistics and reliabilities of the measurements are reported in Table 1.

The results in Table 1 revealed very good to excellent reliabilities for all the factors of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ (see Cohen, 1988). From the mean scores, it was evident that leadership displayed a weak talent mindset towards talent management, that talent management practices in general are poorly applied and that more than 70% of employees considered quitting their jobs. The mean scores were further explored using item analyses.

Concerning the leadership talent mindset, the results showed that the respondents experienced a lack of support from their direct leadership for their career development (mean = 2.62) and believed that their leader did not have their best interest at heart (mean = 2.87). In addition, the participants felt that their leaders did not appreciate them (mean = 2.91).

The results showed a poor to mediocre application for all the talent management practices. More specifically, the results showed that talent retention strategies are virtually lacking (mean = 2.1053), followed by poor talent compensation (2.1364) and talent workforce planning (2.5154). From the item analyses, it was evident that the institution neglects the practice of exit interviews when talented employees are leaving (mean = 2.00) and that leadership does not hold frequent retention conversations with staff (mean = 2.05). From the results, it emerged that the institution does not address why talent is leaving (mean = 2.11) and cannot keep its top performers (mean = 2.27).

Regarding talent compensation, the results revealed that employees believe that their basic salary (mean = 2.20),

medical aid benefits (mean = 2.16) and pension benefits (mean = 2.12) are inadequate. Moreover, the participants indicated that they are not fairly compensated for the work they are doing (mean = 2.15). The results indicated that talent workforce planning is also not prioritised at the government institution. The participants indicated that the institution is unable to forecast the demand and supply of future required talent (mean = 2.54), identify the skills necessary for the most valuable jobs (mean = 2.41) or focus on hiring quality staff members (mean = 2.54). The results for performance management showed that employees believed that they did not receive sufficient information about the purpose (mean = 2.62) and results of their work (mean = 2.56). In addition, participants indicated that their direct leader did not inform them about how well they were performing at their job (mean = 2.40). The results for talent development suggested that the participants experienced a lack of opportunities for training courses (mean = 2.50), promotion (2.64) and personal growth and development (2.70). Furthermore, the participants felt that they could not achieve something in their careers at the institution (mean = 2.47).

Finally, the results showed that about 73% of the respondents voluntarily considered quitting their jobs. The participants indicated that they thought a lot about leaving the institution (mean = 4.30), were currently searching for another job (mean = 4.43) and would leave their institution whenever they got the opportunity (4.57).

Testing of hypotheses

The results of the hypotheses are reported next (Table 2). A series of linear regression analyses were carried out to determine the predictive relationships between leadership talent mindset, talent management practices and voluntary turnover intentions.

The results showed that Leadership talent mindset is a significant positive predictor of talent development F [(1, 404) = 364.060, p = 0.000, adjusted R^2 = 0.562 – large effect], talent compensation F [(1, 404) = 115.332, p = 0.000, adjusted R^2 = 0.291 – small effect], talent workforce planning F [(1, 404) = 144.824, p = 0.000, adjusted R^2 = 0.291 – medium effect], talent performance management F [(1, 404) = 242.282, p = 0.000, adjusted R^2 = 0.466 – medium effect] and talent retention strategies F [(1, 404) = 79.171, p = 0.000, adjusted R^2 = 0.466 – medium effect]. Leadership talent mindset is a significant negative predictor of voluntary turnover intentions F [(1, 404) = 79.171, p = 0.000, adjusted R^2 = 0.251 – small effect].

Talent development F [(1, 404) = 100.851, p = 0.000, adjusted R^2 = 0.257 – small effect], talent compensation F [(1, 404) = 69.416, p = 0.000, adjusted R^2 = 0.194 – small effect], talent workforce planning F [(1, 404) = 37.564, p = 0.000, adjusted R^2 = 0.112 – small effect], talent performance management F [(1, 404) = 83.939, p = 0.000, adjusted R^2 = 0.223 – small effect] and talent retention strategies F [(1, 404) = 83.939, p = 0.000, adjusted R^2 = 0.110 – small effect] are significant negative predictors of voluntary turnover intentions.

TABLE 1: Descriptive statistics of the measurements.

Variables	Mean	Std. deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Management talent mindset	2.9904	1.12596	0.542	−0.542	0.889
Talent management practices					
Talent development	2.6247	1.18877	0.776	−0.280	0.896
Talent compensation	2.1364	1.11734	1.047	0.440	0.916
Talent workforce planning	2.5154	1.12974	0.753	−0.088	0.860
Talent performance management	2.7320	1.29184	0.825	−0.086	0.921
Talent retention strategies	2.1053	1.01145	1.214	1.610	0.922
Turnover intentions	4.4331	1.50611	−0.676	−0.642	0.918

TABLE 2: Results of linear regression analyses.

Variables	Beta	t	p	R	R²	ΔR
H1: Regression analyses: leadership talent mindset and talent management						
Talent development	0.751	19.080	0.000	0.751	0.564	0.562
Talent compensation	0.542	10.739	0.000	0.542	0.294	0.291
Talent workforce planning	0.582	12.034	0.000	0.582	0.339	0.336
Talent performance planning	0.684	15.693	0.000	0.684	0.468	0.466
Talent retention strategies	0.469	8.898	0.000	0.469	0.220	0.217
H2: Regression analyses: leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions						
Voluntary turnover intentions	−0.504	−9.832	0.000	0.504	0.254	0.251
H3: Regression analyses: talent management and voluntary turnover intentions						
Talent development	−0.509	−10.042	0.000	0.509	0.259	0.257
Talent compensation	−0.444	−8.332	0.000	0.444	0.197	0.194
Talent workforce planning	−0.339	−6.129	0.000	0.339	0.115	0.112
Talent performance planning	−0.475	−9.162	0.000	0.475	0.226	0.223
Talent retention strategies	−0.337	−6.083	0.000	0.337	0.113	0.110

The above results confirm Hypotheses 1 and 2 that a leadership talent mindset significantly predicts talent management practices and voluntary turnover intentions. In addition, the results confirm Hypothesis 3 that talent management practices are a significant negative predictor of voluntary turnover intentions

Next, the results of the moderation analyses between the leadership talent mindset, talent management, talent management dimensions and voluntary turnover intentions are reported. The independent and moderator variables were centred. The results of the final step in the moderation analyses are reported in Table 3.

The final step of the moderation analyses between leadership talent mindset, talent management, talent compensation, talent workforce planning, talent performance management, talent retention strategies and voluntary turnover intention yielded a nonsignificant result for the interaction variables. Therefore, the above variables do not moderate the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions.

The final step (4), with the adding of the interaction variable (leadership talent mindset × talent development), yielded a significant result (β = −0.0111, p = 0.053), the total variance explained (R^2 = 0.331, p = 0.000, = 33.10%). Talent development therefore moderates the relationship between leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions.

Based on the above results, the alternative Hypothesis 4 was partially confirmed because talent development moderated the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions.

Follow-up mediation analyses were carried out as per the guidelines of Baron and Kenny (1986) to determine whether talent management in general, talent compensation, talent

TABLE 3: Results of moderation analyses.

Variables	Beta	t	p	R	R²	ΔR
Moderation: leadership talent mindset, talent management and voluntary turnover intentions						
	-	-	-	0.568	0.323	0.315
(Constant)	-	48.745	0.000	-	-	-
Leadership talent mindset	−0.215	−2.927	0.004	-	-	-
Talent management	−0.337	−4.237	0.000	-	-	-
Interaction: leadership × talent	−0.092	−1.569	0.118	-	-	-
Moderation: leadership talent mindset, talent development and voluntary turnover intentions						
	-	-	-	0.558	0.311	0.303
(Constant)	-	48.551	0.000	-	-	-
Leadership talent mindset	−0.257	−3.419	0.001	-	-	-
Talent development	−0.273	−3.414	0.001	-	-	-
Interaction: leadership × develop	−0.111	−1.941	0.053	-	-	-
Moderation: leadership talent mindset, talent compensation and voluntary turnover intentions						
	-	-	-	0.543	0.295	0.287
(Constant)	-	51.875	0.000	-	-	-
Leadership talent mindset	−0.332	−5.510	0.000	-	-	-
Talent compensation	−0.248	−3.656	0.000	-	-	-
Interaction: leadership × comp	−0.063	−1.039	0.300	-	-	-
Moderation: leadership talent mindset, talent workforce planning and voluntary turnover intentions						
	-	-	-	0.516	0.267	0.259
(Constant)	-	50.724	0.000	-	-	-
Leadership talent mindset	−0.427	−6.772	0.000	-	-	-
Talent workforce planning	−0.077	−1.139	0.256	-	-	-
Interaction: leadership × planning	−0.090	−1.540	0.125	-	-	-
Moderation: leadership talent mindset, talent performance management and voluntary turnover intentions						
	-	-	-	0.562	0.315	0.308
(Constant)	-	48.732	0.000	-	-	-
Leadership talent mindset	−0.283	−4.153	0.000	-	-	-
Talent performance management	−0.301	−4.224	0.000	-	-	-
Interaction: leadership × perform	−0.058	−1.052	0.294	-	-	-
Moderation: leadership talent mindset, talent retention strategies and voluntary turnover intentions						
	-	-	-	0.527	0.278	0.270
(Constant)	-	53.422	0.000	-	-	-
Leadership talent mindset	−0.417	−7.230	0.000	-	-	-
Talent retention strategies	−0.112	−1.685	0.093	-	-	-
Interaction: leadership × retention	−0.114	−1.885	0.060	-	-	-

workforce planning, talent performance management and talent retention strategies mediate the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions. The results of Step 3 are reported in Table 4.

The results from Table 4 show that adding the mediation variables did not yield a nonsignificant result for the predictive relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover. The results further showed a significant increase from the variance explained in Step 2 when including the mediator variable with the predictor variable in Step 3 (talent management – R^2 = 0.271 to R^2 = 0.316; talent compensation – R^2 = 0.197 to R^2 = 0.292; talent workforce planning – R^2 = 0.115 to R^2 = 0.260; talent performance management – R^2 = 0.226 to R^2 = 0.313; talent retention strategies – R^2 = 0.113 to R^2 = 0.269).

TABLE 4: Results of mediation analyses.

Variables	Beta	t	p	R	R²	ΔR
Mediation: leadership talent mindset, talent management and voluntary turnover intentions						
	-	-	-	0.563	0.316	0.311
(Constant)	-	30.708	0.000	-	-	-
Leadership talent mindset	−0.216	−2.933	0.004	-	-	-
Talent management	−0.385	−5.215	0.000	-	-	-
Mediation: leadership talent mindset, talent compensation and voluntary turnover intentions						
	-	-	-	0.541	0.292	0.287
(Constant)	-	30.335	0.000	-	-	-
Leadership talent mindset	−0.335	−5.553	0.000	-	-	-
Talent compensation	−0.280	−4.653	0.000	-	-	-
Mediation: leadership talent mindset, talent workforce planning and voluntary turnover intentions						
	-	-	-	0.510	0.260	0.255
(Constant)	-	28.829	0.000	-	-	-
Leadership talent mindset	−0.435	−6.911	0.000	-	-	-
Talent workforce planning	−0.114	−1.815	0.071	-	-	-
Mediation: leadership talent mindset, talent performance management and voluntary turnover intentions						
	-	-	-	0.559	0.313	0.308
(Constant)	-	31.163	0.000	-	-	-
Leadership talent mindset	−0.286	−4.205	0000	-	-	-
Talent performance management	−0.323	−4.749	0.000	-	-	-
Mediation: leadership talent mindset, talent retention strategies and voluntary turnover intentions						
	-	-	-	0.519	0.269	0.264
(Constant)	-	29.027	0.000	-	-	-
Leadership talent mindset	−0.413	−7.147	0.000	-	-	-
Talent retention strategies	−0.174	−3.015	0.003	-	-	-

Based on the above results, Hypothesis 5 was rejected as no evidence was found for a mediation effect between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover.

Discussion

The main objective of this research study was to determine the influence of leadership talent mindset on talent management practices and voluntary turnover intentions of employees in a Botswana local government institution. In addition, this research study explored whether talent management moderated or mediated the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions. This research was motivated by the fact that local government institutions are indispensable for public service delivery through talented people. Yet a significant research gap exists on how talent management can be facilitated through leadership mindsets in a developing market such as Botswana, hence curbing high voluntary turnover intentions in local government institutions. In what follows next, the study results are discussed and interpreted.

The results showed that the leadership talent mindset of the local government institution is weak. The participants, in particular, highlighted a lack of appreciation from their leaders and interest in their career development. The talent mindset of leaders is essential in establishing an empowering work environment where talented employees can get access to ongoing career development opportunities (see Damer, 2020; Mey et al., 2021; Sadeli, 2012). These study results

contradict those of the previous research study, which found that talent development and maintaining positive relationships are essential leadership talent mindset competencies for public sector institutions (see Luna-Arocas & Morley, 2015; Mahfoozi et al., 2018).

From the regression analyses, it was evident that the weak leadership talent mindset reduced the perceived effectiveness of the talent management practices. According to Shingenge and Saurombe (2022), the absence of a sound leadership talent mindset limits the implementation of a proper talent management architecture for local government institutions. Furthermore, a lack of leadership mindset towards the talent management practice undermines the entire talent management process (Du Plessis et al., 2015). Mahfoozi et al. (2018) maintain that leadership talent mindsets are concerned with desirable public sector outcomes. Consequently, a leadership crisis relating to a lack of talent mindset prevents employees from realising their full potential, as evidenced in this study (Marobela, 2020). As with previous research, it is not surprising that the leadership talent mindset was significantly related to the voluntary turnover intentions of the local government employees (see Matobako and Barkhuizen, 2017; Shingenge & Saurombe, 2022). According to Kravariti et al. (2022) and Mangisa et al. (2020), leadership is an essential catalyst for preventing voluntary turnover intentions in poor talent management practice in government institutions. Therefore, leadership prominence and competence are paramount for Botswana local government institutions to curb adverse outcomes on talented employees and remain sustainable (Cheteni & Shindika, 2017; Lerutla & Steyn, 2021; Marobela, 2020).

From the analyses, talent management practices are largely neglected in the local government institution. The participants indicated poor talent retention strategies, such as the inability of the institution to keep top performers, addressing the reasons why talent are leaving and the lack of leadership to hold frequent retention conversations with staff. This research study confirms the continuous absence of talent retention strategies in local government institutions (Mzezewa, 2019). This study shows that investments in talent retention strategies are essential to building a talent pipeline (Traveler, 2019) and preventing high turnover amongst local government employees (Bwowe, 2015). Theron (2015) furthermore emphasised the importance of proactive talent conversations to prevent high voluntary turnover amongst public sector employees.

The participants in this study also expressed their dissatisfaction with benefits (i.e. medical aid and pension) and basic salary. They believed that their compensation was not aligned with the magnitude of the work that they were doing. Poor talent compensation in this study also predicted higher voluntary turnover intentions amongst government employees. The study results confirm that uncompetitive salaries and poor benefits are likely to increase high employee turnover (see Ng et al., 2016; Ogony & Majola, 2018; Salisu, 2016) and a further skills shortage in the government sectors

(Makridis, 2021). Therefore, public sector compensation needs to be reformed (see Spano & Monfardini, 2017) and become a strategic priority to retain scarce skills (Larkin, 2019).

Workforce planning emerged as another problematic area and predicted voluntary turnover amongst employees. The results, in particular, revealed the lack of future projections for the demand and supply of scarce talent and skillsets for the most valuable jobs. The participants also highlighted that the institution does not focus on hiring quality employees. This study results align with those by Theys and Schultz (2020) and Seitio-Kgokgwe et al. (2016), who highlight the decline of good workforce planning in public sector institutions. Khumalo (2018) further advocates that workforce planning is essential to ensure that competent employees are recruited to meet the service needs of the broader public. Poor demand and forecasting of future talent skills can result in subsequent poor performance and reputational damage to local government institutions (see Al-Qudah et al., 2020; Moheb-Alizadeh & Handfield, 2017).

As far as performance management is concerned, the participants indicated that they do not receive sufficient information about the purpose and results of their job. Leaders also appear to provide inadequate performance feedback. The results of this study align with those of Parkies (2015) and Mpabanga (2016), who found that local government institutions lack the institutional culture to support effective performance management practices. Kalonda and Governder (2021) further maintain that a lack of leadership limits the optimisation of individual performance abilities to drive service efficiency in local government institutions. Therefore, performance management can only be effective in local government with the support of leadership (Abana & Brenya, 2021). As with previous research, poor performance management resulted in high voluntary turnover intentions (Mngomezulu et al., 2015).

The participants in this study indicated that talent development practices are weakly applied in terms of training and promotion opportunities. As a result, participants thought that the institution did not enable them to grow and develop personally and could not advance in their careers. Talent development is essential to ensure that employees remain employable and relevant for future task requirements (Bolander et al., 2017; Marchington, 2015; Qhibi, 2017). In this study, talent development played a moderating role in the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover. In line with Mohamed et al. (2019), talent development can facilitate the retention of high-quality employees. Furthermore, institutional learning capabilities can create the workplace environment required for talent optimisation (Acar & Yener, 2016).

The final results did not support a moderating or mediating effect of talent management between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions. The results contradict Masale's (2021) previous findings, which found support for a mediating effect of talent management in the predictive relationship between organisational talent culture and voluntary turnover. Yet the results showed that talent development moderated the relationship between the leadership talent mindset and voluntary turnover intentions. A question of interest is whether talent management combined should be used as a moderator or a mediator between antecedent and outcome variables or rather the underlying dimensions of talent management itself – in this instance, talent development. More research is required to determine the intervening role of talent management between predictor and outcome variables.

Value-add and management implications

The study's results emphasised various areas that local government institutions should focus on to improve talent management and prevent high voluntary turnover intentions. Effective talent management starts with leadership having the talent mindset to invest in talented employees. Leadership from the Botswana local government institution is encouraged to adopt the appropriate mindset to support employees in their careers and also recognise the value and contribution that they are making. A proper leadership talent mindset can also support the effective implementation of talent management practices, such as talent retention strategies, compensation, workforce planning, performance management and talent development. The study results also encourage leaders to engage in proactive retention discussions with talented employees to prevent voluntary turnover. In essence, leadership should have the mindset to create a conducive work environment that will retain essential and scarce talent. The Great Resignation movement should also encourage leadership to improve the demand and forecasting of future requirements in order to ensure that quality skillsets are acquired to sustain the delivery of local government services. Talent development emerged as an essential talent management practice to prevent voluntary turnover without a talent leadership mindset. Therefore, talent investment is essential to facilitate an empowering environment where employees can experience purpose in their work and progress in their careers. Finally, the institution's performance management system and process need to be revised to ensure that employees have clarity on their performance expectations and actual performance outputs. As mentioned earlier in this article, talented employees require a clear line of sight between individual and institutional performance expectations in order to ensure that the service expectations of the broader society are met.

Limitations and recommendations

This research study had some limitations. Firstly, this was a cross-sectional study, with data collected at one time. Consequently, cause and effect inferences cannot be made between the variables. Longitudinal research can assist in predicting trends between the variables (i.e. leadership talent mindset, talent management and voluntary turnover) over a more extended period. Secondly, the sample was limited to a town council in Botswana. The results can therefore not be

generalised to other local government institutions. Future researchers can expand to other African and international countries to allow cross-cultural research and contextual comparison. Thirdly, the objective nature of the quantitative analysis limited the researchers in exploring the study's results in more depth. Future research can benefit from a mixed methods research approach where researchers can explore the rationale for the weak leadership mindset in more detail. Finally, this research study tested the predictive relationship between leadership talent mindset, talent management and voluntary turnover intentions. Future research can explore the impact of different leadership styles on talent management and voluntary turnover. In addition, research can be expanded to investigate the influence of external contextual factors such as government regulations, economic downturns and labour law regulations on the ability of the government leaders to implement talent in local government institutions. Future research can also include other outcome variables such as individual and organisational service performance to determine the impact of leadership talent mindset and talent management thereof.

Conclusion

This research study highlighted the importance of a leadership talent mindset in advancing talent management practice and preventing voluntary turnover intentions in a Botswana local government institution. Talented individuals are imperative for effective and sustained delivery of services for local government institutions. Government sector leaders are therefore responsible for developing the mindset and cultivating a work environment that values the contribution of talent. This research advances the limited knowledge of talent management within the public sector. Leaders and practitioners are encouraged to take note of results and take proactive talent management measures to prevent unnecessarily high talent turnover in local government institutions.

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The authors declare that no competing interest exists.

Authors' contributions

E.N.B. visualised and compiled the article and carried out the data analyses. R.L.M. provided editorial inputs and assisted with data collection.

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Data availability

The data is available on request.

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