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EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TALENT MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN A SELECTED GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION

Abstract:

The main objective of this research was to determine the relationship between talent management and service quality of police officials. A Talent Management Measure and adapted version of the SERVQUAL were administered among police officials (N=140). The results showed that more than half of the respondents were in agreement that talent retention practices need substantial improvement. The results further showed inadequate compensation, a lack of strategic talent management policies and talent development practices. About two-thirds of the participants were in agreement that performance management systems and talent attraction practices are somewhat adequate. The results showed a significant relationship between strategic talent management, performance management, talent retention, talent attraction, compensation and rewards, talent development and the assurance and reliability dimensions of service quality. Recommendations are made.

Keywords:

Police Officials, Talent Attraction, Talent Management, Talent Retention, Service Delivery

JEL Classification: J24

Introduction

The stressful nature of police work is well documented. Police officials are exposed to personal danger, discomfort, severe trauma and anxiety during crime prevention operations (Masiapata, 2007). Maintaining the police workforce level is becoming a great challenge in the midst of high rates of suicide, alcoholism, burnout, and absenteeism within the profession (Myendeki, 2008; Paulsen, 2008). Consequently police officials are in drastic need of a supporting work environment that can assist them to cope with the presures that are part of their daily work.

The main objective of this research was to determine the relationship between the talent management and quality service delivery of police officials. More specifically this research aimed at addressing the following research questions:

- What are the perceptions of police officials regarding the current application of talent management in their workplace?
- What are the perceptions of police officials regarding the quality service delivery in their workplace?
- To what extent does talent management influence the quality service delivery of police officials?

Recently the South African Police Service (SAPS) implemented a service delivery improvement plan with the aim to deliver "An efficient, effective and development-orientated public service, which espouses the need for quality and access to service delivery by the government" (SAPS, 2015: 5). This plan further proposed that the SAPS recruit and train officials to be professional, impartial and competent in their work when serving the community (Faull, 2017).

Despite these initiatives, the quality service delivery of the SAPS remains a challenge. According to Gopal, Mbongwe and Marimuthu (2015) results from available studies confirm that the service that clients receive from the SAPS is of poor quality. Poor services ranged from complaints about the police not doing their jobs, unacceptable behaviour towards the public, slow response times and lack of responsibility (Vilakazi, 2015). Talent managament has been identified as an enabler for service delivery and organisational performance (see Barkhuizen, 2015). We therefore belief that talent management can play a significant role in the enhancement of quality service delivery of police officials.

Literature Review
Talent Management
Abdul-Kareem (2016) describes talent management as a process to ensure that organisations have the right number of people and the right kind of people at the right place capable of meeting current and future business priorities. Barkhuizen (2015) defines talent management as a strategic business process that incorporates the effective management of the career life cycle of skilled and key employees from start to finish. More specifically Cannon and McGee (2011) belief that talent management can be effectively applied by:

- developing a strategy to determine what the organisation needs to meet the current and future demands of the business plan;
- establishing processes that measure the available and required competence;
- creating a range of developmental tools and processes to provide tailored approaches depending on the individual needs of employees;
- identifying ways to obtain and retain those who are critical to success;
- establishing appropriate approaches dealing with those who no longer fit organisational requirements

A study by Schwartz, Schurink and Stanz (2007) showed that frontline police officials were not committed to their jobs anymore even though the SAPS tried to retain employee commitment through rapid promotions. Moreover policy implementation to redress equity in conjunction with unfair promotion practices, transfers and rewards were a major cause of dissatisfaction and lack of effective service delivery.

Talent Management Practices
A great deal of research has been devoted towards detecting the most prominent talent management practices in Southern African government institutions. Research to date identified the following practices as key to the effective management of talented employees in the workplace: Management Commitment, Talent Acquisition, Workforce Planning, Talent Development, Performance Management, Rewards and remuneration and Talent Retention. In what follows next a brief description of each of these practices are presented and its relevance to the government sector.

Management Commitment: According to McCauley and Wakefield (cited in van Dijk, 2008) the commitment of senior managers is a key ingredient for talent management practices to excel in organisations. Studies showed that management mindset towards talent management was a significant predictor of the turnover intentions of younger generation and early career talent (Du Plessis, Barkhuizen, Stanz & Schutte, 2015; Lesenyeho, 2017; Matobako & Barkhuizen, 2017). Management support for talent management also played an important role in enhancing positive work related behaviours

such as organisational commitment (Lesenyeho, 2017), job and organisational satisfaction (Barkhuizen, Schutte & Nagel, 2017; Magolego, Barkhuizen & Lesenyeho, 2013; Theron, Barkhuizen & Du Plessis, 2014) and ultimately organisational performance (Masale, Barkhuizen, Mokgele & Makgala, 2016). To date the majority of studies in government institutions highlighted the need for more management commitment towards talent management to enhance quality service delivery (Schutte & Barkhuizen, 2016).

Workforce planning: Armstrong and Taylor (as cited by Ncube, 2016) define workforce planning as a core process of human resource management that is shaped by organisational strategy and ensures the right number of people with the right skills, in the right place at the right time to deliver short and long-term organisational objectives. According to Mogwere (2014), workforce planning is about predicting who will be the key drivers of the organisation's future success. Poor workforce planning and forecasting of future talent needs can have a detrimental effect on any organisation (Barkhuizen, Welby-Cooke, Stanz & Schutte, 2015). Strauss (2012) found that a shortage of teachers in rural schools had an important impact on the ability of the remaining teachers to perform in their jobs and meet the expectations of school children.

Talent acquisition: Talent acquisition is regarded as a process of finding and acquiring skilled human labour for organisational needs and to meet any labour requirements (Kumudha & Priyadarshin, 2016). Ineffective recruitment precludes any chance for effective candidates' selection because when recruitment falls short, selection must proceed with a pool of poorly qualified candidates (Kahn & Louw, 2010). Saurombe, Barkhuizen and Schutte (2017) found that a compelling organisational brand is crucial for the attraction of key and competent employees.

Talent development: According to Born and Heers (2009) training and development are crucial as far as talent management is concerned. Appropriate learning and development interventions are needed in relevant stages of a career path of talented individuals to achieve their maximum potential (Mello, 2008). Barkhuizen (2014) found that opportunities for career development and further training are main factors for generation Y employees when selecting their employer of choice. Likewise a study by Lesenyeho (2017) showed that the availability of training and development opportunities enhanced the talent retention of early career academics. Clearly career planning and development are important tools in developing and retaining an effective workforce.

Performance management: Dhanabhakyam and Kokilambal (2014) regard performance management as the process through which supervisors and those they lead gain a shared understanding of work expectations and goals, exchange performance feedback, identify learning and development opportunities, and evaluate performance results. A good performance management system can act as a positive method to identify

developmental opportunities and implement a succession planning process (Mondy, Noe & Premeaux, as cited in Makhuzeni & Barkhuizen, 2015). Organisations that do not focus on performance management at all levels have difficulty to find competitive advantage through talent (Lawler & Ulrich, 2008). Makhuzeni and Barkhuizen (2015) found that effective performance management systems are important for the retention of school teachers in public schools.

Compensation and rewards: According to Reddick and Coggburn (2008) the aim of the total compensation system is to achieve the following goals among others: attracting employees, retaining solid performers, motivating performance, spending compensation money wisely, aligning employees with goals of the organisation and rewarding the behaviour that the organisation wants to encourage. Hewitts (2008) maintain that a high performance workforce can be achieve when accountability for results and opportunities for rewards and advancement are aligned. Nthebe, Barkhuizen and Schutte (2016) and Makhuzeni and Barkhuizen (2015) recommend the application of a total rewards strategy for the public sector consisting of a combination of compensation, benefits, work-life balance, training and development opportunities and effective performance management systems.

Talent retention: The retention of a talented workforce remains a significant challenge for many public sector institutions in South Africa (Barkhuizen, 2015). Phillips and Cornell (cited in Born and Heers, 2009) define retention as the percentage of employees that are remaining in the organisation. Nafei (2015) is of the opinion that a positive talent culture contributes to the retention of employees. The trend to emerge is that many government institutions do not have talent retention strategies in place to retain top talent. This in turn poses a significant risk for the performance and sustainability of the government (Madimabe, Barkhuizen & Schutte, 2017). Government institutions furthermore experience a significant loss of knowledge due to the high staff turnover at management level (Public Service Commision Report, 2015). Government institutions should therefore develop talent retention policies and practices that will attract new employees, satisfy older generation of employees and motivate current employees to stay with the organisation (Barkhuizen, 2014).

Service Quality
The most prominent definition of service quality was coined by Parasuraman and colleagues (see Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1990) to measure the service delivered against expected service performance. According to Munusamy et al. (as cited by Nafei, 2015) service quality is referred to as the difference between customer's expectations of the service encounter and the perception of the service received. The South African government uses the Batho Pele (People First) principles to ensure that quality service is provided to all people in South Africa. These principles include Consultation, Service

Standard, Access, Courtesy, Information, Openness and Transparency, Redress and Value for money (Mello, 2008).

Service quality can be measured in terms of five main dimensions, namely, tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, reliability and empathy (Parasuraman et al. 1990). Tangibles refer to the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials. Assurance refers to knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence. Responsiveness refers to the willingness of employees to help customers and provide prompt service. Reliability refers to the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Empathy refers to the caring, individualised attention that organisations provide to their customers.

Schwartz, Schurink and Stanz, (2008) found that quality services in the police force are undermined because of perceived unfairness relating to organisational change processes and a lack of resources (Schwartz et al., 2007). A study by Masiapata (2007) revealed that ethics education and training, good incentive structures, effective performance appraisals and organisational culture reform can enhance positive work ethos and ethics of police officials. Matobako and Barkhuizen (2017) found that talent management is an important factor for the motivation and retention of junior correctional officials.

Relating Talent Management and Service Quality

A great deal of managers, practitioners and researchers advocate that talent management is the key to business competitiveness and sustainability. Limited empirical research exist to confirm the above notion. Studies by Masale et al. (2017) and Magolego et al. (2013) showed that poor talent management practices significantly reduces the performance of employees. A study by Barkhuizen, Schutte and Smit (2015) among support staff in a public higher education institution showed that talent management practices such as staffing enhanced the reliability and empathetic dimensions of quality service delivery. In the same study a lack of talent retention strategies reduced the ability of staff to deliver timely (responsive) service in an environment that is not conducive for quality service delivery (tangibility). A study by Nthebe et al (2016) among public school principals showed that effective performance management enhanced the reliability of quality service orientation. In the same study adequate benefits enhanced the assurance and reliability dimensions of service quality. Simasiku and Schutte (2017) found that high workloads significantly reduced the reliable and responsiveness dimensions of service quality whereas colleague support enhanced responsiveness to service in a Namibian parastatal.

H 1: *Talent Management would be positively related to service quality*

Research Design

Research Approach

The research utilised a quantitative research approach. Since it is practically impossible to collect information from all SAPS employees, as the SAPS have departments (Provinces/Divisions/Components) nationally, three divisions were used for study. The researcher used a non-experimental cross-sectional method as the aim was to explore the relationship between two variables namely, talent management and service delivery in the SAPS. A. cross-sectional study is also identified as one-shot or a status study, which is designed to study some phenomenon by taking a cross-section of it at a time (Kumar, 2014). Two variables were identified, talent management being an independent variable and service delivery a dependent variable, which means that the research is correlational. Surveys were used to collect the data.

Research Participants

The participants used for the study were SAPS employees, both those employed under the Police Service Act and under the Public Service Act, irrespective of salary levels or rank, both male and female, of all races, permanent and non-permanent. Employees were chosen using a probability sampling method. Probability sampling means a sample selection whereby each member of the population had an equal chance of being chosen (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Two hundred questionnaires were distributed to a random sample of employees who were chosen from the already existing lists (generated system report) from the Human Resource Management section of the three divisions. The participants were included because they have knowledge of the policies and what is happening around them, so they will provide the information required honestly. This research meet all ethical requirements.

In total of 140 questionnaires were returned, with all being usable for statistical analysis. This represents a response rate of 70%. The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Measuring Instruments

	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	71	50,7
	Female	69	49,3
Language	Afrikaans	38	27,1
	English	9	6,4
	Indigenous	93	66,4
Race	African	92	65,7
	Coloured	5	3,6
	Indian	7	5,0
	White	35	25,0
Age	20-29 years	22	15,7
	30 - 39 years	21	15,0
	40 - 49 years	49	35,0
	50 years plus	29	20,7
Qualifications	Matric	14	10,0
	Certificate	42	30,0
	Diploma	10	7,1
	Advanced Diploma	31	22,1
	Bachelors	11	7,9
	Postgraduate	31	22,1
Job level	Operational	71	50,7
	Supervisory	6	4,3
	Middle Management	17	12,1
	Senior Management	42	30,0
Years in Police	0 to 10 years	53	37,9
	11 to 20 years	36	25,7
	21 to 30 years	44	31,4
	30 years and more	7	5,0

Years in Current Job	0 to 10 years	97	69,3
	11 to 20 years	29	20,7
	21 to 30 years	13	9,3

Most of the participants in this sample were male (50,7%) with indigenous languages as their main home language (66,4%). The participants were primarily representative of the African ethnic group (65,7%), aged between 40 and 49 years (35%) and in possession of a Certificate as their highest level of educational qualification (30%). The majority of the participants were employed at operational level (50,7%), employed between 0 to 10 years (37,9%) in the police force and employed between 0 to 10 years in their current job (69,3%).

Measuring Instruments

Talent management Questionnaire: A talent management questionnaire was used to measure the respondents' perceptions of talent management practices in the organisation (Barkhuizen, 2015). The questionnaire consisted of 34 items and measured eight talent management practices namely management commitment, workforce planning, staffing, talent acquisition, talent development, compensation and rewards, performance management and talent retention. Respondents were required to assess the current state of application of talent management practices on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). This questionnaire has been valid and reliable in several South African studies (see Barkhuizen, 2015).

SERVQUAL: An adapted version of the SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1990) was used to measure service quality. The questionnaire consists of 11 items and measures five service quality dimensions, namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility on a six-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire was validated in South African context (Nthebe et al., 2016).

Research Procedure

Permission was obtained from the necessary authorities, namely Divisional Commissioners: Research, Finance and Administration Services, Personnel Management and Human Resource Utilisation in order to undertake the research prior to the administration of the questionnaires. Permission was also obtained from the supervisors of the participants and participants themselves. The purpose of the research

was explained to Section Heads and participants. For the sake of convenience, survey questionnaires were distributed electronically (emailed) and hand delivered (hard copy) to participants. For feedback purposes, completed questionnaires were emailed back and collected. Participation was voluntary and confidential.

Statistical analysis

The data was analysed using SPSS.24 (SPSS, 2017). Descriptive statistics (i.e. frequencies, means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were applied. Exploratory factor analyses, using varimax rotation, was used to determine the factor structure of the measuring instruments. Cronbach alphas were used to determine the reliability of the measuring instruments. A cut-off point of $\alpha \geq 0,70$ was used. Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships between talent management and service delivery.

Results

A Principal components analysis was done on the 34 items of the Talent Management Measure. The initial results showed that six factors could be extracted, based on the eigenvalues. A subsequent principal components analysis was done, using varimax rotation, to specify six factors. Four items were deleted because of problematic loadings. The six factors explained 67,460% of the variance, and were labelled *Strategic Talent Management* (Factor 1), *Compensation and Rewards* (Factor 2), *Performance Management* (Factor 3*), Talent Retention* (Factor 4), *Career Development* (Factor 5) *and Talent Attraction* (Factor 6). All items showed acceptable loadings. The results of the Total variance explained of the measure and the rotated component matrix are reported in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: Total variance explained for the Talent Management Instrument

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10,981	36,602	36,602	10,981	36,602	36,602
2	3,442	11,475	48,076	3,442	11,475	48,076
3	1,930	6,434	54,511	1,930	6,434	54,511
4	1,415	4,717	59,228	1,415	4,717	59,228
5	1,366	4,554	63,783	1,366	4,554	63,783

6	1,103	3,678	67,460	1,103	3,678	67,460
7	1,011	3,370	70,830			
8	0,902	3,008	73,838			
9	0,774	2,581	76,419			
10	0,672	2,240	78,659			
11	0,629	2,095	80,754			
12	0,569	1,897	82,651			
13	0,535	1,782	84,433			
14	0,466	1,553	85,986			
15	0,455	1,515	87,501			
16	0,430	1,435	88,936			
17	0,402	1,341	90,278			
18	0,391	1,304	91,581			
19	0,366	1,221	92,803			
20	0,322	1,074	93,877			
21	0,307	1,025	94,902			
22	0,250	0,835	95,736			
23	0,223	0,744	96,480			
24	0,214	0,713	97,193			
25	0,174	0,579	97,772			
26	0,170	0,566	98,338			
27	0,140	0,467	98,805			
28	0,134	0,445	99,250			
29	0,114	0,380	99,631			
30	0,111	0,369	100,000			

Table 3: Varimax Rotation for the Talent Management Measure

	Component					
	Strategic Talent Management	**Compensation & Rewards**	**Performance Management**	**Talent Retention**	**Career Development**	**Talent Attraction**
TLM1	**0,734**	-0,098	0,014	0,072	0,334	0,202
TLM2	**0,802**	-0,076	0,048	0,011	0,288	0,037
TLM3	**0,782**	-0,067	0,020	0,181	0,203	0,147
TLM4	**0,753**	0,070	-0,004	0,285	0,259	0,098

TLM5	**0,798**	0,046	0,081	0,397	0,087	-0,001
TLM6	**0,640**	0,266	0,121	0,313	0,065	0,015
TLM7	**0,654**	0,252	0,256	0,187	0,016	0,191
TLM8	**0,603**	0,038	0,070	0,217	0,038	0,390
TLM9	**0,632**	0,069	0,025	0,195	-0,013	0,350
TLM10	**0,783**	0,078	0,190	0,108	0,011	0,202
TLM11	**0,556**	0,318	0,241	0,090	-0,060	0,233
TLM12	0,423	0,156	0,184	-0,150	0,012	**0,571**
TLM13	0,437	0,130	0,205	0,093	-0,052	**0,551**
TLM14	0,304	0,112	-0,043	0,150	0,392	**0,681**
TLM15	0,394	0,210	0,065	0,327	0,205	**0,510**
TLM20	0,313	0,291	0,236	0,139	**0,638**	0,097
TLM21	0,181	0,315	0,203	-0,020	**0,734**	0,084
TLM22	0,083	0,284	0,133	0,177	**0,729**	0,060
TLM23	-0,132	0,132	**0,545**	0,163	0,023	0,509
TLM24	0,041	0,051	**0,842**	0,069	0,030	0,169
TLM25	0,246	0,095	**0,739**	0,096	0,190	0,036
TLM26	0,201	0,151	**0,767**	-0,028	0,247	-0,036
TLM27	0,044	**0,708**	0,084	0,034	0,334	0,198
TLM28	-0,024	**0,842**	0,105	0,077	0,083	0,127
TLM29	0,062	**0,902**	0,092	0,067	0,124	0,031
TLM30	0,173	**0,798**	0,077	0,136	0,279	0,056
TLM31	0,253	0,149	0,082	**0,527**	0,250	0,302
TLM32	0,258	0,113	0,169	**0,714**	-0,012	0,196
TLM33	0,564	0,185	0,072	**0,570**	0,029	-0,046
TLM34	0,335	0,014	-0,025	**0,768**	0,134	-0,029

A principal components analyses were done on the 11 items of the SERVQUAL. The initial results showed that two factors could be extracted, based on the eigenvalues. A subsequent principal components analysis was done, using varimax rotation, to specify two factors. The two factors explained 71,876% of the variance, and were labelled *Reliability* (Factor 1), and *Assurance* (Factor 2). All items showed acceptable loadings. The results of the Total Variance explained for the measure and the rotated component matrix are reported in Tables 4 and 5 below.

Table 4: Total variance explained for the SERVQUAL

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6,809	61,903	61,903	6,809	61,903	61,903
2	1,097	9,974	71,876	1,097	9,974	71,876
3	0,717	6,518	78,394			
4	0,541	4,920	83,314			
5	0,427	3,885	87,200			
6	0,358	3,259	90,458			
7	0,296	2,692	93,151			
8	0,275	2,499	95,650			
9	0,222	2,018	97,669			
10	0,150	1,366	99,034			
11	0,106	0,966	100,000			

Table 5: Varimax rotation for the SERVQUAL

	Reliability	Assurance
SD1	0,311	0,757
SD2	0,122	0,893
SD3	0,825	0,202
SD4	0,589	0,263
SD5	0,821	0,271
SD6	0,841	0,133
SD7	0,892	0,176
SD8	0,894	0,101
SD9	0,805	0,321

SD10	0,792	0,331
SD11	0,779	0,291

The descriptive statistics of the measuring instruments are reported in Table 6 below. The results showed acceptable to excellent reliabilities for the factors. The results show that more than half of the respondents were in agreement that talent retention practices are poorly applied. This is followed by poor perceived compensation, strategic talent management practices, and talent development practices. About two-thirds of the sample were in agreement that performance management systems and talent attraction practices are somewhat adequate.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics of the Measurements

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES					
Strategic Talent Management	3,3318	1,06844	-0,275	-0,758	0,932
Compensation	3,1214	1,19520	0,119	-0,712	0,889
Performance Management	4,4125	0,95958	-0,497	0,344	0,784
Talent Retention	2,9875	1,11454	0,240	-0,710	0,787
Talent Development	3,4690	1,27630	-0,116	-0,824	0,810
Talent Attraction	3,9179	1,07055	-0,690	0,118	0,791
SERVICE DELIVERY					
Assurance	4,1679	1,07055	-0,500	-0,580	0,659
Reliability	3,4786	1,10050	-0,384	-0,412	0,946

The results of the correlation analyses between talent management and service delivery are reported in Table 7 below. The results showed that all talent management practices are significantly positively related to the Reliability and Assurance dimensions of service delivery.

Table 7: Results of the correlation analyses

Talent Management Practices	Assurance	Reliability
Strategic Talent Management	,389**	,482**
	0,000	0,000
Compensation	.197*	.252**
	0,020	0,003
Performance Management	,323**	,283**
	0,000	0,001
Talent Retention	,401**	,321**
	0,000	0,000
Talent Development	,218**	,309**
	0,010	0,000
Talent Attraction	,382**	,411**
	0,000	0,000

* Statistically significant: $p \leq 0,01$
\+ Practically significant correlation (medium effect): $r \geq 0,30$
++ Practically significant correlation (large effect): $r \geq 0,50$

The results showed a practically significant relationship with a medium effect between strategic talent management, performance management, talent retention, talent attraction and assurance. The results further showed a practically significant relationship with a medium effect between strategic talent management, talent retention, talent development and talent attraction. The above results imply that talent management, if effectively applied, will enhance the quality service delivery of the SAPS and vice versa. As with this study, the poor application of talent management practices reduces the ability of the SAPS to deliver reliable services.

From the above results, Hypothesis 1 is confirmed that Talent Management has a significant positive relationship with service delivery

Discussion

The main objective of this research was to determine the relationship between talent management and service quality of police officials. The results of this research showed amongst others that a talent management strategy for police officials are lacking. Consequently the SAPS will find difficulties in identifying, attracting and retaining the

appropriate pool of talented individuals that can deliver the quality services required by the community (Faull, 2017). As with previous research, the results of the study showed that compensation and talent retention practices are poorly applied. According to Hewitts (2008) a high performance culture can only be achieved if individuals are rewarded appropriately. A lack of rewards enhances the turnover intentions of key and skilled employees (Makhuizeni & Barkhuizen, 2015). The lack of talent retention strategies is a significant risk that threatens the sustainability and ability of the SAPS to ensure a safe society for citizens (Madimabe et al., 2017).

The participants of this study seemed somewhat satisfied with the performance management system of the SAPS. As mentioned by the Mondy et al. (cited in Makhuzeni & Barkhuizen, 2015) the performance management system can assist to identify development opportunities for succession planning. In this study almost half of the participants perceived a lack of career development opportunities. Career development interventions and training are needed in the different stages of the talent life cycle to assist talented individuals to achieve their full potential. Career development opportunities are also important in retaining a competent South African police force (Lesenyeho, 2017).

The results of this research showed that talent management plays a significant role the ability of police officials to deliver quality service. The lack of talent management practices in this study resulted in reduced levels of service performance relating to assurance and reliability. Strategic talent management, talent retention and talent attraction practices appeared to have the greatest influence on service delivery. The results confirm previous findings that talent management plays a significant role in service delivery (see Barkhuizen et al., 2015; Scholastika & Schutte, 2017). The above results re-emphases the need of the SAPS to develop talent management policies with clear strategies that will guide the institution in achieving its goals through its talented people.

This research makes important theoretical and practical contributions. From a theoretical perspective this study provides new empirically validated knowledge on talent management and its role in the service delivery of police officials. From a practical point of view this research highlighted problematic areas in the application of talent management that requires improvement. Of particular importance is the development and implementation of a talent management strategy that will guide the effective talent management of police officials from attraction to retention.

This research had some limitations. First the sample included police officials from a selected geographical area. The results can therefore not be generalised to other police officials. Future research should be expanded to other provinces in South Africa and include police management in the sample to obtain a more holistic perspective on the application of talent management and the outcomes thereof for the police service. Secondly this research used a cross-sectional design with data gathered over a short period of time. Longitudinal research can be applied to track the application of talent management over a longer period of time to make cause and effect inferences. Finally future research can also include more antecedents (i.e. leadership) and outcome variables for talent management (i.e. well-being, turnover intentions) in the police services.

In conclusion, this research highlighted the importance of talent management in enabling the effective service delivery of police officials. Management should be empowered (educated and trained) in terms of issues relating to talent management such as:

- to attract, develop and retain talent in the SAPS in order to enhance service delivery;
- to adhere to relevant talent management strategies or policies; and
- to apply the correct mind-set to issues relating to effective talent management.

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