



Factors affecting the retention of male administrative employees

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Orientation: The retention of male administrative employees is influenced by workplace factors, including career advancement opportunities, organisational support and perceptions of gender roles.

Research purpose: The purpose of this study was to explore the factors affecting the retention of male administrative employees.

Motivation for the study: This study explores the challenges and experiences of male administrators, particularly in light of persistent stereotypes that associate administrative roles with women. As more men enter these positions, understanding the factors influencing their retention becomes essential.

Research approach/design and method: A quantitative research approach was employed, focusing on male administrators in a selected municipality in Gauteng province. The sample comprised 125 participants selected through census sampling. Only male employees in administrative roles within the municipality were included, while female administrative employees were excluded. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Main findings: The study found that retention of male administrative employees is affected by limited promotion opportunities, lack of managerial support, poor recognition, gender-based stereotypes, and low job satisfaction within an unsupportive environment. Although more men are entering the field, these challenges continue to impact their job satisfaction and long-term commitment to the field.

Practical/managerial implications: Despite progress in gender equality, male administrators still face gender-based discrimination and stereotypes, which hinder their growth. Addressing these biases can improve fairness, satisfaction, and retention in the workplace.

Contribution/value-add: Understanding male administrators' experiences offers insights into gender dynamics and helps inform inclusive retention strategies.

Keywords: male administrative employees; female-dominated occupation; retention; retention strategies; gender stereotypes.

Introduction

The effectiveness of any organisation depends on the performance of its administrative employees. These individuals play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth operation of daily activities and the attainment of organisational goals and objectives. The contributions of administrative employees are indispensable to the overall functioning and success of an organisation (Aliata & Hawa, 2014; Meyer et al., 2018). While both male and female administrators possess equal talents and qualifications and can make significant contributions to any organisation, it is noteworthy that there is a striking underrepresentation of male administrators. In most organisations, administrative employees are predominantly comprised of females, as noted by Gonäs et al. (2019). This trend may be attributed to historical perceptions that have typically deemed females as suitable candidates for administrative roles, potentially leading to a reluctance to view men as ideal employees in female-dominated occupations. The study of Zippia (2022) uncovered a striking gender disparity within the administrative field, with females comprising a substantial majority at 80.3%, while males are notably underrepresented at only 19.7%. These findings highlight the significant predominance of females in administrative roles.

Men who aspire to work in fields dominated by women often face a variety of challenges. According to Carte and Williams (2017), these challenges include enduring stereotypes that question their

suitability for such roles, facing discrimination that can manifest in hiring practices or workplace dynamics, and experiencing feelings of isolation due to being in the minority. According to Rabie et al. (2021), gender stereotypes are one of the main obstacles men confront in female-dominated occupations. These stereotypes can undermine their perceived suitability for such roles and lead to discrimination in hiring practices and workplace interactions. Gauci et al. (2023) allude that males in female-dominated occupations often find themselves in situations where their masculinity is called into question, prompting them to feel obligated to justify their career decisions. This pressure can contribute to feelings of isolation and may cause significant stress, as men struggle to balance societal expectations with their professional aspirations. Furthermore, these challenges can create barriers to success, such as limited opportunities for advancement and professional development, and may lead to role conflict, where the clash between societal expectations and personal identities affects their work-life balance.

The purpose of the study was to explore the factors affecting the retention of male administrative employees within the selected municipality in Gauteng province. The retention of male administrative employees remains a challenge in organisations where administrative roles have traditionally been seen as female-dominated. Despite a growing number of men entering this field, gender-based stereotypes and societal biases continue to affect their job satisfaction, career progression and overall retention. These barriers not only hinder the professional advancement of male administrators but also limit organisations' ability to cultivate a diverse and inclusive workforce. Understanding and addressing these issues are crucial to developing effective retention strategies and creating a supportive work environment for all employees.

Literature review

This section reviews existing literature that explores the roles of administrative employees in organisations, the gender dynamics in administrative roles and the factors that influence employee retention.

What is the role of administrative employees in an organisation?

Ngotngamwong's study (2018) underscores the significance of administrators in organisational operations, emphasising their adeptness in coordination and their potential to impact the organisation's outcomes positively or negatively. Similarly, Ocholi et al. (2022) corroborate Ngotngamwong's assertion, highlighting the crucial role played by administrative employees in the success of any organisation. They emphasise that the supportive function of administrative employees is indispensable for attaining the organisation's goals and objectives.

The administrative field as a profession traditionally associated with women

The administrative profession has historically been viewed as a female-dominated field, shaped by both cultural

norms and statistical trends. This gendered perception has contributed to a significant overrepresentation of women in administrative roles, especially within public sector organisations (ILO, 2021). According to the International Labour Organization, women account for approximately 47% of public sector employment globally, compared to 39% in the private sector, with a majority of them occupying administrative positions. Similarly, in South Africa, public service data indicate a dominant female presence in administrative roles (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani, 2020).

Folberg et al.'s study (2020) identifies administrative work among the top five occupations predominantly occupied by females. Muradova and Seitz's research (2021) unveils the predominant presence of women in administrative roles, highlighting the expectation for candidates to demonstrate traits typically associated with femininity, including tenderness, tenacity, meticulousness and adaptability. Furthermore, Lingel and Crawford (2020) suggest that administrative roles persistently uphold gender stereotypes, presenting them as one of the most gendered occupations. This contention is supported by the study of Van Antwerpen and Ferreira (2016), which found that 73.42% of survey respondents were females. Similarly, Ngotngamwong's (2019) research indicates that 90% of administrative employees are female, with males comprising just 10% of the employees, thus highlighting the significant representation of women in administrative roles.

Defining the concept of employee retention

Amushila and Bussin (2021) define employee retention as an organisation's ability to attract, maintain and engage high-potential and valuable contributors in roles that demand mission-critical and sought-after skills. Shakeel and But (2015) define employee retention as the actions taken to allure and motivate employees to remain with the organisation for an extended duration. Cloutier et al. (2015) propose that organisations can enhance employee retention through the implementation of four key strategies. Firstly, promoting effective communication within the organisation is essential. Secondly, diversifying employees through recruitment efforts is important. Thirdly, selecting individuals with appropriate qualifications is crucial. Finally, offering employees opportunities for growth and training can significantly contribute to their retention.

Factors that influence employee retention

Employee retention plays a vital role in an organisation's economic advancement, primarily by allowing the organisation to allocate more time to production and reducing the need for frequent new employee training (Vasquez, 2014). Aman-Ullah et al. (2020) have identified various factors that contribute to employee retention, including aspects related to work design, employee selection, training and development, capacity enhancement, employee empowerment, career progression, job attributes, compensation and benefits, flexible

work environment, career opportunities, supervisor support, workplace conditions, rewards and job satisfaction. De Sousa et al. (2018) further emphasise the impact of factors such as training and development, supervisor support, career prospects, job characteristics (encompassing elements like skill diversity, job autonomy and task complexity), work-life balance and salary on retention. Additionally, their study recognises the significance of work environment, retention strategies, wages and compensation, job satisfaction, welfare measures and job security as additional contributors to employee retention.

Theories of employee retention

There are two theories of employee retention: job embeddedness and job characteristics. Serhan et al. (2015) postulates that the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) centres on three primary components: the mental states of employees (including experienced meaningfulness, responsibility and knowledge of outcomes), the central job facets (comprising skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy and feedback) influencing these mental states, and the outcomes in personal and work domains (such as heightened internal work drive, superior work performance, contentment with the work, and reduced absenteeism and turnover) stemming from these mental states.

Job embeddedness is a concept that assesses an individual's (1) connections with other individuals, teams and groups; (2) evaluations of their compatibility with the job, organisation and community and (3) considerations of what they might have to give up if they were to leave their current employment (Mitchell et al., 2001).

In contrast, Chiat and Panatik (2019) argue that leveraging motivational theories can optimise employee retention rates within organisations. Building on this perspective, Ramlall (2004) delineates key factors from various theories and elucidates their potential impact on initiatives aimed at enhancing employee retention. These factors encompass:

- **Needs of the employee:** Employees have multiple needs based on their individual, family and cultural values. In addition, these needs depend on the current and desired economic, political and social status; career aspiration; the need to balance career, family, education, community, religion and other factors; and a general feeling of one's satisfaction with the current and desired state of being.
- **Work environment:** Employees want to work in an environment that is productive and respectful, provides a feeling of inclusiveness and offers a friendly setting.
- **Responsibilities:** Given that one feels competent to perform in a more challenging capacity and has previously demonstrated such competencies, an employee may feel a need to seek additional responsibilities and be rewarded in a fair and equitable manner.
- **Supervision:** Managers and other leaders, more frequently than others, feel a need to teach, coach and develop

others. In addition, these individuals would seek to influence the organisation's goals, objectives and the strategies designed to achieve the mission of the organisation.

- **Fairness and equity:** Employees want to be treated and rewarded fairly and equitably regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, geographic location or other similarly defined categories. With increased effort and higher performance, employees also expect to be rewarded more significantly than their counterparts who provide output at or below the norm. The employee's effort and performance at a particular level are influenced by her or his individual goals and objectives, which would vary by each individual. An outcome or reward perceived to be highly significant and important can result in a higher level of effort and performance by the individual employee.
- **Effort:** Even though employees may exert higher levels of effort into a position based on a perceived significant reward, this could be a short-term success if the task itself does not challenge or provide satisfaction to the employee.
- **Employees' development:** Employees prefer to function in environments that provide a challenge, offer new learning opportunities and significantly contribute to the organisation's success.

The challenges faced by males in female-dominated occupations

Studies have shed light on the challenges encountered by men in female-dominated professions. Gonäs (2019) underscores the difficulties men face in such occupations, including limited exposure to employee empowerment and constrained organisational mobility. Ahmed et al. (2021) corroborate this, revealing minimal company responses to job applications submitted by men seeking roles in female-dominated administrative professions. Meadus and Twomey (2011) provide insight into the societal perceptions of men pursuing careers in non-traditional occupations, describing them as anomalies. The historical stigma attached to engaging in 'women's work' has discouraged men from entering professions predominantly occupied by women (Swiatek & Dill, 2021). Muradova and Seitz's (2021) research highlights pervasive gender discrimination in hiring practices within female-dominated professions. Similarly, Torre (2018) identifies significant obstacles faced by men in such occupations, including career barriers, gender bias, threats to masculinity and inadequate support, all contributing to high employee turnover rates.

Research design

Research methodology

This section outlines the research methodology employed in the study. It details the research design, target population, sampling methods, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques used to conduct the study.

Research approach and design

The approach and design adopted in this study are a descriptive research design and the quantitative research approach to systematically investigate the factors affecting the retention of male administrative employees. This method was chosen due to its ability to use numerical data and statistical analysis to interpret results that are applied to a population sample. Using this approach, the data gathered can be analysed accurately and objectively, ensuring the results are reliable and informative. As Bryman (2012, p. 323) stated, this approach is a widely accepted method for conducting research in the social sciences.

Research participants

The study focused on male administrators employed within the selected municipality in Gauteng province, with a total sample of 125 participants. Census sampling was utilised for this research, as it involves collecting data from an entire group that accurately represents the broader population. Given the relatively small size of the population, this approach was chosen to ensure a high degree of accuracy in the findings.

Measuring instruments

A structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions was used to collect data and was divided into three sections: A, B and C, comprising 48 questions. Section A focused on demographic and job-related information, while Sections B and C used a four-point Likert scale to measure challenges and retention factors affecting male administrative employees. Items in Section B were adapted from Ferreira and Van Antwerpen (2012), and the items in Section C were adapted from Butt et al. (2020). The questionnaire was administered online, utilising Google Forms as the platform for data collection, and participants were invited to take part in the survey via email. The email contained an introduction to the study, informed consent information and a link to the Google Forms survey.

Validity and reliability

To ensure the validity of the data collection instrument, a pilot study was conducted to assess the effectiveness and consistency of the research instrument. The Cronbach's alpha test is a critical statistical procedure used to assess the internal consistency of a measurement scale, thereby verifying that the items included are measuring the same underlying construct in a reliable manner. Achieving acceptable alpha values is an essential prerequisite, as it allows researchers to move forward with additional statistical analyses and draw meaningful conclusions (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). For this study, a threshold of 0.7 or higher for the alpha value is established as the minimum standard for acceptability (Shrestha, 2021).

Data analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The data were initially

recorded in Microsoft Excel 2016, with results visualised through graphs. To ensure the reliability of the measuring instrument, the internal consistency was evaluated through the Cronbach's alpha coefficient test.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the Tshwane University of Technology Research Ethics Committee (REC2024/02/024-MS). Additionally, permission for data collection was obtained from the City of Tshwane Municipality.

Results

Reliability of the measuring instrument

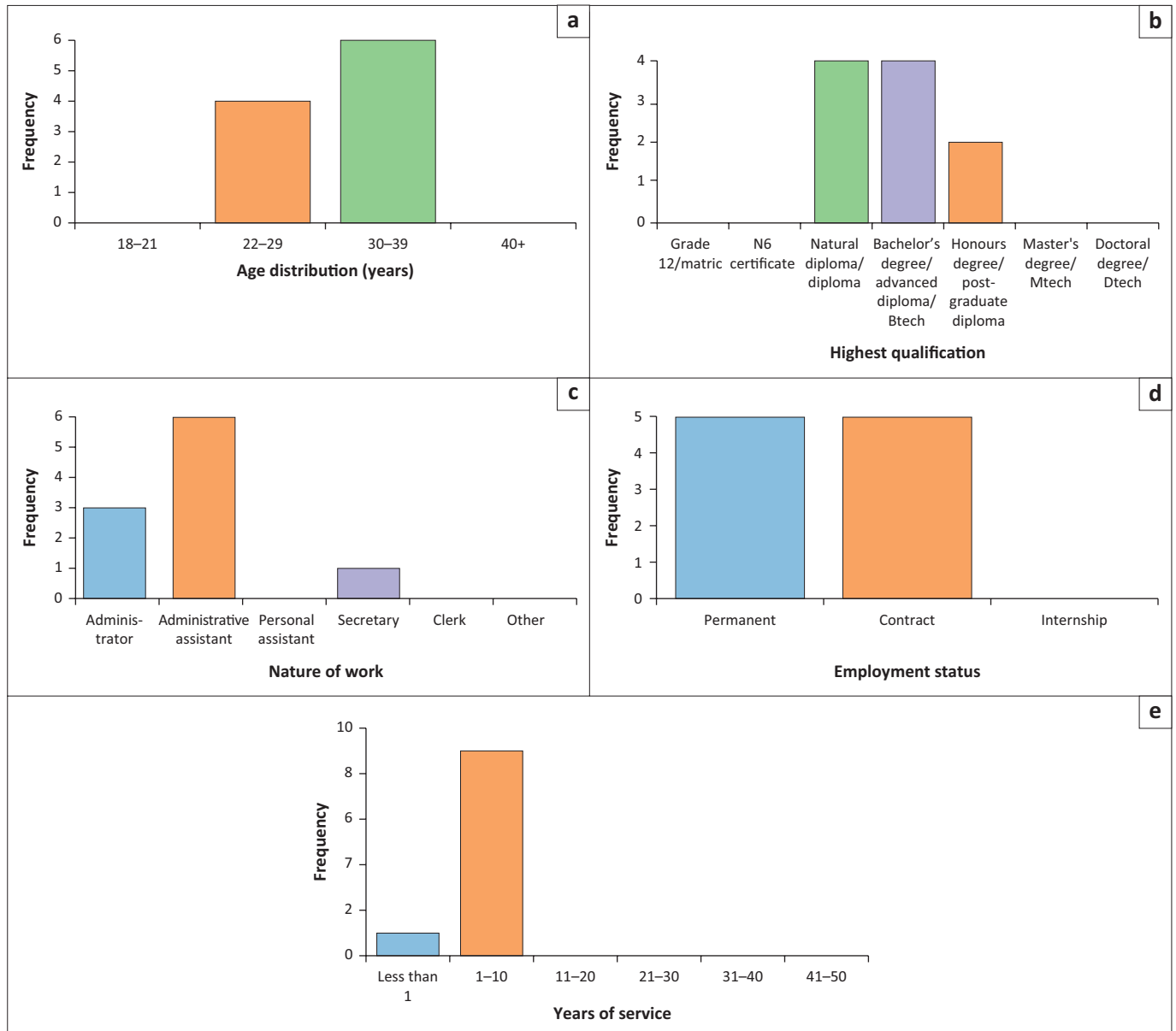
The results of the reliability analysis for this study, which employed Cronbach's alpha to evaluate the internal consistency of the constructs being studied, are presented in Table 1. This table illustrates the extent to which the individual items intercorrelate and contribute to the overall reliability of the measurement scale.

According to the findings presented in Table 1, the constructs demonstrate a high level of reliability. The Cronbach's alpha values fall between 0.7545 and 0.964, which suggests that the reliability of these measures ranges from good to excellent. This indicates that the constructs are consistently measuring the intended concepts effectively.

Looking at the demographics and job details of the male administrative employees at the chosen municipality gives an important insight. Figure 1 shows the demographics of the study group. Most employees are in their early to mid-career stages: 60% are aged 30–39 and 40% are aged 22–29. This shows a mix of newer professionals and more experienced workers. Most of the respondents (40%) have a National Diploma or Diploma, and 40% hold Bachelor's Degrees or similar qualifications, while 20% have Honours degrees or Postgraduate Diplomas, which means that male administrative employees within the municipality are well-educated. The majority of male administrative employees work in administrative roles (60%), while fewer are Administrative Assistants (30%) or Secretaries (10%). Employment stability is good, with an equal split between permanent (50%) and contract (50%) positions. Most employees (90%) have been with the organisation for 1–10 years, which shows that while there are some experienced workers, there are not many long-term employees or new ones.

TABLE 1: Reliability statistics using Cronbach's alpha.

Constructs	Number of items	Average inter-item covariance	Alpha
The challenges faced by male administrators	9	0.1189	0.7545
Job satisfaction	4	0.1668	0.7679
Training and development	4	0.1861	0.8512
Job environment	9	0.1411	0.7895



N, National; Btech, Bachelor of Technology; Mtech, Master of Technology; Dtech, Doctor of Technology.

FIGURE 1: Demographics of the participants.

The data show that the employees have a lot of potential to grow and improve. However, there are some important issues to address. Many employees are looking for better chances to move up in their careers, which is important for keeping them motivated and happy at work. It is also important to make sure that employees are satisfied with their jobs. By creating a positive work environment and listening to employees' needs, companies can help everyone do their best and continue to get better.

Exploring the experiences of male administrative employees in female-dominated fields offered important insights into the challenges they encounter. The challenges are outlined in Figure 2, and they encompass several key aspects. The main obstacle lies in the failure of organisational leadership to acknowledge its capabilities. The majority of the respondents reported instances where their managers underestimated

their capabilities, possibly influenced by stereotypes surrounding male employees in traditionally female-oriented roles. It can be argued that this lack of recognition not only affects individual morale but also perpetuates the misconception that administrative professions are only suited for women.

Consequently, a majority of male administrators perceive their gender as a barrier within their profession. Despite this perception, a large portion of respondents reported receiving sufficient support from senior management, mitigating some of the challenges they faced. Another significant challenge identified is the constant comparison against their female colleagues. It can be argued that this is creating a sense of pressure and possibly affecting their confidence in their roles. However, despite these comparisons, male administrators reported minimal negativity from their male colleagues,

indicating a relatively supportive work environment among peers. Interestingly, while male administrators face these challenges in recognition and comparison, they do not report experiencing discrimination in terms of remuneration packages. This suggests that while there are disparities in perception and treatment within the workplace, equitable compensation practices are maintained, providing a semblance of fairness in this aspect of their employment.

After examining the challenges faced by male administrators, as shown in Figure 2, the study investigated the potential impact of these challenges on their retention within their organisation. This involved assessing the factors that influence retention. The analysis is important for understanding the workplace dynamics that affect the retention of male administrators. The study focused on three key retention factors: *job satisfaction, training and development and the work environment*.

The data presented in Figure 3 sheds light on both the positive and negative factors that impact male administrators' work experiences and overall *job satisfaction*. The data presented reveals that a large portion of male administrative employees enjoy their tasks and look forward to their daily responsibilities, suggesting a good alignment between their duties and their skills and preferences. However, most respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their current jobs, indicating potential issues within their work environment. It can be argued that this discontent may stem from facing gender stereotypes and career barriers in the administrative field. Additionally, the majority of the respondents indicated that their skills are often compared to those of their female colleagues. It can be argued that the comparison between

male and female administrators is a subject of debate, as there is a prevailing assumption that women are more suitable for administrative positions. Despite these challenges, most male administrative employees feel their contributions are valued and significant within the organisation, which fosters a sense of appreciation among employees. Nonetheless, most of the male administrators feel that there are limited opportunities for career advancement in their current roles. This can lead to reduced motivation and retention rates. These findings are consistent with a study by Arshad (2020), which indicates that gender discrimination has a significant impact on job satisfaction and, consequently, retention rates.

Figure 4 illustrates the findings related to *Training and Development*. The data presented indicate that most male administrators do not perceive opportunities for promotion within their workplaces. Specifically, 60% of male administrators disagreed with the statement regarding the availability of promotion opportunities. This suggests potential issues related to career growth, recognition or transparency in the promotion processes within the organisation. It could be assumed that such perceptions might lead to decreased motivation and higher turnover rates among male administrative employees. In contrast, the majority of respondents reported that they have ample opportunities to develop personal skills at work. The finding that 60% of respondents agreed with this statement suggests a generally positive perception of skill development opportunities within the workplace. However, there is a notable discrepancy in perceptions regarding the adequacy of training. While 50% of respondents feel they do not receive adequate training to perform their jobs effectively, 40% believe they do. In the survey, it was found that there is a notable difference in how employees perceive the sufficiency of their training. Specifically, 50% of the respondents feel they lack the necessary training to effectively perform their job duties, while 40% believe they have adequate training. This mixed perception implies that there are different opinions regarding the quality of training received, with a slightly larger portion of respondents expressing dissatisfaction towards their current training programmes.

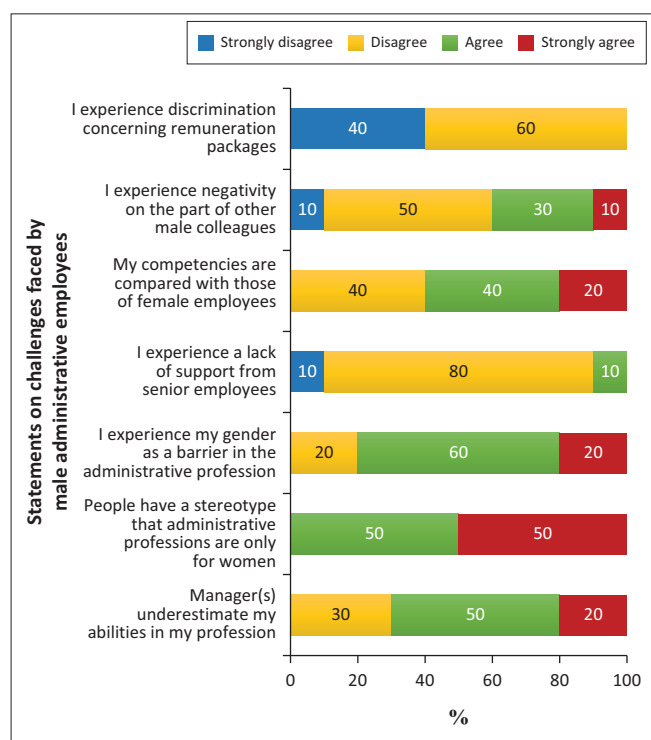


FIGURE 2: Challenges faced by male administrative employees.

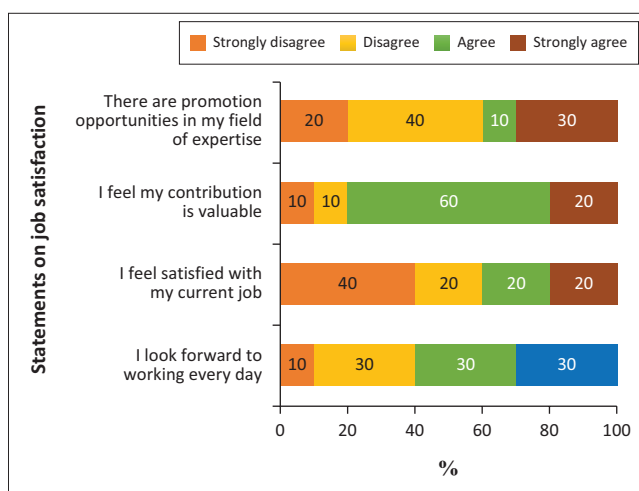


FIGURE 3: Job satisfaction.

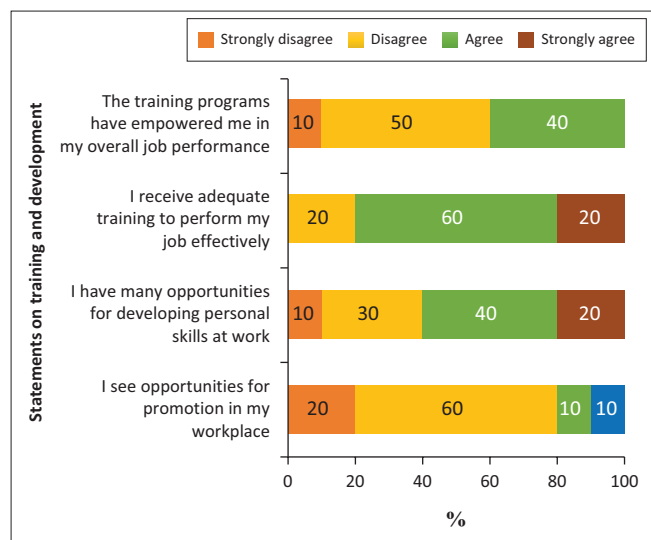


FIGURE 4: Training and development.

Figure 5 illustrates the findings related to *job environment*. The findings indicate a significant majority agreed that employees are treated with respect in their workplace. Similarly, a majority indicated feeling respected by their colleagues. Regarding organisational goal setting, respondents believe that their company's goals align with the capabilities of its employees. However, concerning autonomy in decision-making, only a minority of respondents agreed, while a majority expressed disagreement, indicating potential issues in this area. This concern raises potential issues related to employee satisfaction and engagement, as individuals who feel constrained in their decision-making autonomy may experience frustration and disengagement within their roles. Additionally, regarding pride in the organisation, respondents disagreed, suggesting a lack of satisfaction or engagement. Despite this, a majority of respondents feel a strong sense of belonging to their organisation. Regarding personal development, the findings are mixed, with a majority of respondents disagreeing, indicating dissatisfaction or limited growth opportunities. On the other hand, respondents expressed a preference for continued employment at their organisation, suggesting a general desire for stability or contentment with the current workplace environment.

Discussion

Outline of the results

The challenges faced by male administrators in the female-dominated field

The study reveals that male administrators face a range of challenges within the administrative field, as indicated in Figure 2. First of all, a significant proportion of respondents perceive a lack of recognition or acknowledgement of their capabilities by their managers. This finding is compounded by the acknowledgement among respondents of a stereotype suggesting that administrative professions are primarily suited for women. This stereotype likely influences managerial attitudes and behaviours, contributing to unconscious biases that undervalue the contributions of male

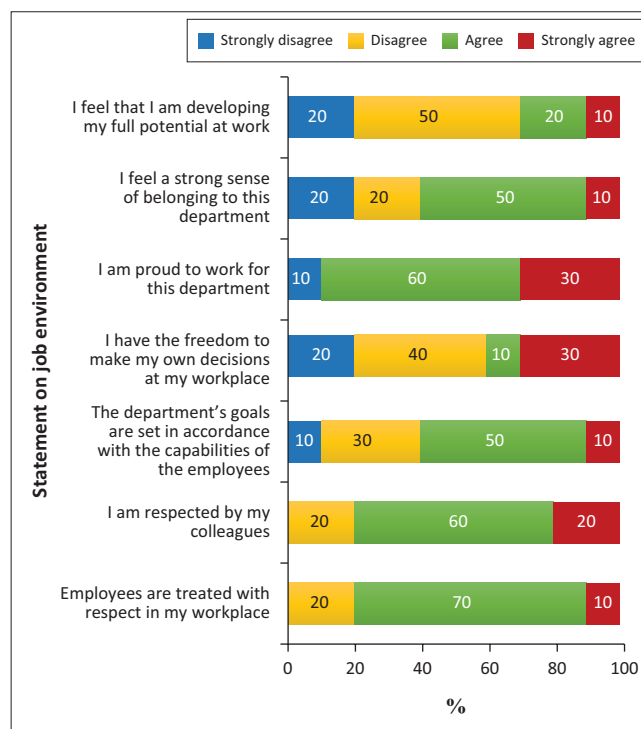


FIGURE 5: Job environment.

administrators. Additionally, male administrators report experiencing a lack of support from managers, further hindering their professional advancement. They are often compared to their female counterparts, facing unfair scrutiny and expectations. Moreover, male administrators perceive their gender as a barrier within the administrative profession, encountering systemic challenges and biases that impede their career progression. These combined factors contribute to a challenging work environment for male administrators, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address gender inequalities and promote inclusivity within the administrative sector. The findings are consistent with the study of Torre (2018), Forsman and Barth (2017) and Moskos (2020), who have observed that when men enter professions traditionally dominated by women, it challenges stereotypical perceptions of gender roles and behaviour. Additionally, Gonäs et al. and Ahmed et al. (2021) point out in their literature that gender discrimination is a challenge for men in professions dominated by women. This study reveals that men working in administration are also affected by this issue and highlights the importance of addressing these concerns to ensure that all candidates, regardless of gender, receive equal opportunities and fair treatment.

Retention factors: Job satisfaction, training and development, and job environment

Job satisfaction: The study's findings suggest that job satisfaction levels among male administrative employees could be improved. As shown in Figure 3, there appears to be a high level of dissatisfaction among male administrators in their current roles. It can be concluded that job dissatisfaction among male administrative employees may be influenced by a variety of factors, including social norms, gender stereotypes and limited opportunities for

career advancement. However, further studies would be beneficial in identifying potential areas for improvement and addressing underlying issues. The results are consistent with Sobiraj et al.'s (2011) findings, which highlight low job satisfaction rates among men in female-dominated professions. Sobiraj et al. (2011) suggest that men's job satisfaction is negatively impacted by social stressors when working with traditionally female colleagues, as they often experience a mismatch between their expectations and the existing workplace dynamics.

Training and development: The study's results revealed that male administrators do not have opportunities for promotion and personal skill development in their workplaces. Additionally, they do not receive adequate training to perform their jobs effectively. Consequently, this issue is a concern as it may lead male administrative employees to leave their jobs. Organisations need to provide adequate training and development opportunities to employees. Training and development represent crucial tactics for boosting employee retention. When employees sense that they are continuously learning and advancing, they will be less inclined to leave (Nguyen, 2020).

Job environment: The study has highlighted some important areas for improvement concerning the job environment. One key finding was the lack of autonomy in decision-making and a general absence of organisational pride. It can be argued that these factors can decrease male administrative employees' motivation and job satisfaction. Similarly, a lack of organisational pride also contributes to a sense of dissatisfaction and disengagement, leading to decreased morale and loyalty among male administrators. In terms of personal development, while the findings were mixed, they present an opportunity to address any dissatisfaction and provide more growth opportunities for employees. The prevalent lack of supportive work environments aligns with Raziq and Maulabakhsh's (2015) research, emphasising the importance of organisational support and its impact on employee satisfaction and retention. The agreement between the findings of this study underscores the need for organisations to address these issues to improve job satisfaction and retention among male administrators.

Practical implications

The findings of this study go beyond simply recognising gender biases. They show how gender stereotypes impact the job satisfaction and retention of male administrative employees. To address retention, organisations need to acknowledge the unique challenges faced by male administrators and create opportunities for their professional growth and success. Organisations should strive to mitigate the impact of gender biases by offering equitable avenues for mentorship, skill development and career progression. It is important to empower male administrators to contribute meaningfully to their work environments, which can enhance their job satisfaction and retention. Prioritising initiatives targeted at male administrators can lead to a more

inclusive workplace and more engaged employees. This notion is also supported by Ellemers (2014), who posits that providing guidance, mentoring and other forms of support is essential in maintaining employees' ambition and helping them display and develop their abilities.

Limitations and recommendations

This study focused on male administrative employees within the chosen municipality in Gauteng province. The limited sample size of male administrative employees at the municipality may not adequately represent the experiences of male administrators in other regions or sectors. Broader research across other locations and industries is recommended to enhance generalisability and identify common trends. Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends that organisations should implement clear career pathways, fair promotion practices and consistent recognition to enhance job satisfaction and retention among male administrative employees. Leadership training emphasising bias awareness and effective communication is crucial. Providing equal access to training, mentorship and structured development programmes will further aid the growth of male administrators and promote lasting commitment among male administrative employees.

Conclusion

This study explored the factors affecting the retention of male administrative employees. The study uncovered that male administrators encounter numerous challenges in the perceived female administrative field. These include insufficient recognition, lack of managerial support and limited career advancement opportunities. Gender biases and stereotypes aggravate these challenges, resulting in job dissatisfaction and a less supportive work environment.

The lack of recognition for their contributions is partly because of stereotypes that view administrative roles as more suitable for women, leading to unconscious biases among managers. Gender stereotypes and biases play a significant role in shaping perceptions of competence, credibility and authority. These perceptions often lead to unequal treatment and limited opportunities for certain individuals or groups, perpetuating systemic inequalities. This contributes to a work culture that undervalues the skills and potential of male administrators. Furthermore, the absence of adequate support from managers leaves male administrators feeling unsupported and overlooked, impacting their professional growth and morale. Additionally, male administrators often feel isolated and marginalised, which further diminishes their motivation and sense of belonging within their organisations, which ultimately affects their retention.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

K.M.M. contributed to conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing the original draft, visualisation, project administration and data curation. S.S.M. contributed to resources, writing, reviewing, editing and funding acquisition, and served as the supervisor.

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Data availability

Data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, K.M.M., upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and are the product of professional research. They do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency or the publisher. The authors are responsible for this article's results, findings and content.

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