

## Synergistic Measures to Mitigate Staff Retention Challenges in Selected Zimbabwe's Public and Private Universities: Returnee Lecturers' Perspective

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### Abstract

*The investigation analysed synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges in Zimbabwe's two public and two private universities from the perspective of seven criterion sampled Returnee Lecturers. The study's instrument was an open-ended interview. Interview transcripts were analysed using NVivo data analysis software. The major finding was that the Human Resources Units can exit interview intelligence to retain staff. The other finding was that staff can be actively involved in retaining themselves. The study concluded that involvement of staff themselves in staff retention is among synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges. One other conclusion of the study was that forging partnerships with other universities and organisations is a gateway to enhancement of staff retention in public and private universities. The study recommended that public and private universities need to seriously consider the concerns that quitting lecturers write on the staff exit interview questionnaire as a basis for improving their measures to mitigate staff retention challenges. Future investigations regarding measures to mitigate staff retention challenges need to cover all public and private universities in Zimbabwe and combine quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.*

**Keywords:** Staff Retention Challenges, Staff Retention, Staff Retention Challenges, Returnee Lecturers, Public University, Private University

### Introduction

This paper is a sixth excerpt from the researcher's thesis (in press) entitled, 'A Comparative Case Study of Zimbabwe's Public and Private Universities' Staff Retention Strategies' submitted for examination to the Zimbabwe Open University late in 2014. Many an organisation grapple with measures to mitigate staff retention challenges. There is a further perception that since the beginning of the second millennium (current era), staff retention strategies of diverse nature are obtaining in the universities around the globe (Seehra, 2013). Such developments have been motivated by the challenges developing countries' universities face, many of which relate to the changes that are taking place on the higher education market the world over, and to which institutions have to adjust (Mhlanga, 2008). For example, research studies reveal that universities are expected to employ strategies that help them retain their best staff in the wake of growing competition among the world's universities (Blair and Jordan, 1994; Oginni, Ogunlusi and Fayesiku, 2013; Shin, 2002). Monetary staff retention strategies are assumed to be beneficial in the short term, while non-monetary ones are perceived to be more long lasting than the former (Osasona, 2005). Therefore, more resources are likely to be employed to arrest staff loss through brain drain. Lecturers were leaving their jobs because of low pay, lack of research and staff development facilities to name a few (Adi, 2012; Mushonga, 2005). It is not surprising that universities are expected to play a major role in employing staff retention strategies that make them an employer of choice.

Tarusikirwa (2000, p. 45) in Zimbabwe sums up well how leadership could be responsive to staff issues in this way:

Managers with charisma have a natural appeal to people and people naturally like them and people naturally perform for them. Such people have an air of dignity about them, hold themselves with dignity or have a high degree of public relations with workers as they treat each and every worker with dignity and respect and in turn the workers respect and like them.

Given Tarusikirwa's (2000) observations, it can be argued that leaders who treat workers with dignity and respect have a higher probability to motivate and inspire workers to stay in an organisation than the autocratic ones who employ leadership by using fear and intimidation. Autocratic leaders are more likely to push away workers than retaining them.

Early research at the turn of the new millennium (Netswera, Rankhumise and Mavundla, 2005, p. 38-39) in South Africa noted the following as examples of ways to mitigate staff retention challenges:

Marketing intelligence, appropriate learning programmes, learner and academic support, administrative support, eradication of discriminatory practices, economic relevance and sense of purpose, management and governance, the institutional track record and growth potential, salaries and other benefits, work environment, staff development and promotion, and the external environment.

The above citation reveals that strategy-diversity goes a long way in mitigating challenges to staff retention strategies that universities and other organisations face. Still in South Africa, Van Dyk et al. (2013) cite scholars (such as Döckel, 2003; Döckel, Bason and Coetzee, 2006) who concur that over the past four decades (1970-2010), the role of commitment in the retention of scarce and critical staff has received much attention.

Seehra (2013) in Australia examined the creation of a culture of serendipity with specific reference to recruitment and retention strategies at Cambridge in which she described:

- how Cambridge is addressing recruitment, retention and the management of its talent pipeline;
- continuous development for the academic faculty; and
- Delivering career aspiration of researchers.

The preceding background has highlighted various measures to mitigate staff retention challenges. The measures appear to be country and organisation-specific. They are however not tailored to Zimbabwe's public and private universities. Also, they did not originate from the Returnee Lecturer participants. Consequent upon the above observations, this study analyses synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges from the perspective of Zimbabwe's public and private universities' Returnee Lecturers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Mitigating staff retention challenges in organisations is a huge worldwide problem (Boyne, John and Petrovsky, 2011; Cocklin, 2013, Jongbloed, 2012, Mubatsi, 2012). While many studies have focused on strategies to curb brain drain (Blair and Jordan, 1994; Cheese, Thomas and Craig, 2007; Oginni et al., 2013; Mhlanga, Matope, Mugwagwa, Phuthi and Moyo, 2013; Pitts, Marvel and Fernandez, 2011), there appears not much that has been investigated concerning measures to mitigate staff retention challenges from the perspective of Returnee Lecturers. On the basis of this discrepancy, the excerpt of the thesis under examination examines possible synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges from the perspective of Returnee Lecturers in selected Zimbabwe's public and private universities.

### **Aim(s) of the Study**

The purpose of the paper is to investigate synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges from the perspective of Returnee Lecturers in selected Zimbabwe's public and private universities.

### **Objective(s) of the Study**

The study examines possible synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges from the perspective of Returnee Lecturers in selected Zimbabwe's public and private universities.

### **Sub-question(s)**

The study has a two-pronged sub-question.

- How do synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges from the perspective of Returnee Lecturers in selected Zimbabwe's public and private universities differ?
- How are synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges from the perspective of Returnee Lecturers in selected Zimbabwe's public and private universities similar?

### **Importance of the Study**

The research is important for two reasons. First, the research is worth carrying out because it convinces Zimbabwe's public and private universities' managers to be proactive rather than reactive to lack of staff retention situations. They use hindsight to become proactive by questioning the worth of existing staff retention strategies with a foresight to draft and offer staff retention strategies meant to improve the quality of life of lecturers. Second, while many studies have been carried out world over, they were focusing on staff retention and staff retention strategies for isolated organisations. There appears to be very little comparative research regarding staff retention strategies in the public and private universities from a qualitative research point of view of Returnee Lecturer participants. On the basis of these theoretical and methodological gaps, the conduct of this study in order to comparatively interrogate and inform practice regarding how well Zimbabwe's public and private universities employ staff retention strategies.

### **Review of Related Literature**

This section covers pockets of related studies selected from different continents. In Europe, McCord (2014, p.71-5) came up with five measures to mitigate staff retention challenges:

- Trust people, not policies. Reward candour. And throw away the standard play book (p.71).
- Hire, reward and tolerate only fully formed adults (p.72).
- Tell the truth about performance (p.73).
- Managers own the job of creating great teams (p.74).
- Leaders own the job of creating the company culture (p.75).

In America, Pitts et al. (2011, p. 758) made four conclusions regarding measures to mitigate staff retention challenges namely:

1. Workplace satisfaction which seems to play the largest role in predicting turnover intention, followed by demographic and organisational/relational factors.
2. These findings suggest managers can use an array of tactics to encourage employee retention. The most important issue is overall job satisfaction, which means that managers must seek to understand the motivations and issues of individual employees in order to understand the specific issues that should be addressed.
3. Managers can also focus on supervisor-employee relationships, which are related to retention in our leaving agency model. This, would mean training supervisors in leadership and interpersonal relationships so that they build high effective exchange relationships with their subordinate employees.
4. Finally, a key factor in our leaving agency model is the opportunity for advancement. Giving employees the chance to work toward the next level of responsibility is a key strategy. Use of individualised work plans and development programmes are two ways to ensure that employees do not get stalled at a particular level, but progress accordingly. Pitts et al. (2011) cite Cotton and Tuttle (1986), Griffeth et al. (2000), Porter and Steers (1973) and Spector (1985) as praising institutional transparency because of its ability to bring about benefits of satisfaction with opportunities for career growth and promotion, which in their absence have been found to influence measures to mitigate staff retention challenges.

In Australia, Hutchings, De Cieri, and Shea (2009, p. 20) drew a number of conclusions:

- Our findings suggest that in response to skills shortages and critical changes in legislation, resource sector organisations utilise at least some ‘good’ employment practices, such as safe working conditions, high remuneration relative to other sectors and urban locations, and effective communication strategies (p.20)
- However, more needs to be done by employers in this sector to attract employees through offering more flexible work practices for employees and better work-life balance, particularly for firms operating in remote locations. (p.20)
- Environmental conditions, including infrastructure, such as schools and medical facilities are also considerations for employers seeking to attract a workforce to remote locations.

In Africa, Sokro’s (2012, p. 171) study in Ghana came up with recommendations to alleviate staff retention challenges using employer branding:

- Employees consider employers who value and treat them fairly.
- The employee is judicious about the company’s policies and inquires hard about the reality of this experience.
- Important to an employee is the organisation’s employee/employer relationship.
- There is need for employers to analyse, measure and position their employer brand to the job market where they will attract the right people with the right skills in the shortest period of time.

Cumulatively, selected studies from different continents’ universities and other organisations provide a basis for informing this study in three ways. First, early research findings have realised that individual universities and other organisations, as well as their employees have unique needs which must be met in order to retain employees. Second, the fact that some of the studies focused on non-university organisations, it means that universities stand to benefit by borrowing empirically-tried and tested measures to mitigate staff retention challenges, albeit different contexts. Third, while the preceding studies were not comparing perceptions of participants in the studied organisation, the current one compares synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges from the perspective of Returnee Lecturers in selected Zimbabwe’s public and private universities.

## **Research Methodology**

The researcher based the study on qualitative research. The researcher realised that qualitative research is people-centred (Creswell, 2009). Thus, qualitative researchers are allowed to obtain feedback on their findings from the participants because qualitative research is anthropocentric in nature (Willig, 2001). The researcher was able to obtain the real lived experiences of synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges in Zimbabwe’s public and private universities from the perspective of the Returnee Lecturer participants. These participants possessed a wealth of local and international experiences regarding staff retention issues and practices.

A qualitative multiple-case study research design suited this study. Sjøberg (2008) and Yin (2009) concur that a case study needs to cover both a particular phenomenon and the context within which the phenomenon is obtaining. Specifically for this study, the researcher made use of a multiple-case study strategy to permit a comparison of synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges in Zimbabwe’s public and private universities from the perspective of the Returnee Lecturer participants.

Purposive sampling was used to select two public universities (Cases 1 and 4) and two private universities (Cases 2 and 3). If within a population there are some elements which we believe are particularly crucial then the only way to assure this is to deliberately select them (Fox, 1969, p. 34 in Khosa, 1994, p. 89). Since this study was a qualitative case study in nature, there was no need for the researcher to generalise the findings on the sample (Creswell, 2012),

but to carry out a comparative in-depth study regarding synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges in the selected public and private universities from the perspective of the Returnee Lecturer participants.

Criterion sampling enabled the researcher to select four Returnee Lecturers from public universities, that is, (three from Case 1 and one from Case 4), and three from private universities, that is, (two from Case 2 and one from Case 3). The researcher uses the codes; Case 1 Returnee Lecturers 1-3 and Case 4 Returnee Lecturer 1 to refer to participants who belong to public universities to aid data presentation and discussion in chapters 4 and 5. The researcher also uses codes Case 2 Returnee Lecturer 1-2 and Case 3 Returnee Lecturer 1 to refer to participants who belong to private universities to aid data presentation and discussion in chapters 4 and 5. Criterion sampling involves searching for cases or individuals who meet a certain criterion (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). It suited this study in that Returnee Lecturers possess a wealth of staff retention experiences they had gained locally and internationally.

The study relied on an open-ended interview to generate data. Interviews involved generation of data through face-to-face verbal interaction between individuals while at the same time, taping the dialogue (Dochartaigh, 2007; Kothari, 2007; Thomas and Nelson, 2001). Audio-taping face-to-face interviews were used for five reasons. First, they allowed the researcher to accurately record participants' opinions regarding staff retention strategies in the universities with minimum effort. Second, it permitted the researcher to concentrate fully on the discussion rather than trying to strike a balance between conversation and note taking. Third, the researcher found audio-taped interviews to be a more natural way of interacting with different participants in the study than requesting them to fill in questionnaires or do a test. Fourth, such interviews presented the researcher with the obvious advantage of preserving the entire verbal part of the interview for later analysis. Fifth, the researcher also noticed that, although some participants were nervous to talk while being audio-taped, the uneasiness disappeared after a short time.

Thick interview data transcripts were analysed using NVivo- a data analysis software which assisted the research to manage large sets of data. . In order to make sense of field data, the research data were analysed using NVivo, a software programme for Windows PC which combines efficient management of non-numerical, unstructured data with powerful processes of indexing, searching and theorising (Creswell, 2012). The researcher came up with a template to feed edited interview data into the NVivo data analysis software. NVivo assisted the researcher to manage, shape and interpret unstructured data. It provided him with a workspace and tools to enable him to work through the data with so much ease. It sped up the investigator's research process by providing him with more time to analyse the research material, identify themes, glean, insight and develop meaningful evidence-based comparative conclusions regarding synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges in Zimbabwe's public and private universities from the perspective of Returnee Lecturers. The software managed to process the data and come out with a summarised output which was subjected to open coding in which key categories were highlighted using a highlighter. In that regard, a summarised output was presented in Table 1 under findings and discussion section using borrowed, but modified format from Chisaka and Kurasha (2012).

## Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussion are guided by the presentation given in the following Table 1.

**Table 1: Themes and sub-themes regarding synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges faced by Zimbabwe's public and private universities**

Themes	Sub-theme(s)	Substantiating statements
<b>1.Human Resources Department</b>	1.Exit Interview intelligence	1. Through exit interview intelligence as information (Case 1 Returnee Lecturers).
	2.Recruitment and selection processes	1...using proper recruitment and selection processes (Case 2 Returnee Lecturer 1).
	3.Good induction policies	1...with good induction for staff... (Case 2 Returnee Lecturer 2).

<b>2.University staff themselves</b>	1.University leadership and staff	1...university leadership and staff should be actively involved (Case 4 Retained Lecturer 1).
<b>3.Strategic Partners</b>	1.Partnerships with various organisation	1The ...to partner with... or organisations in ... in development like grants or scholarship support (Case 2 Returnee Lecturer 1).
	2.Creating linkages with other institutions	1. Creating linkages with other institutions such as universities and donors... (Case 3 Returnee Lecturer 1).

Adopted and adapted from Chisaka and Kurasha (2012:7)

Returnee lecturers suggested three themes underlining synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges faced by their universities. They identified Human Resources Department, university staff themselves and strategic partners as central staff retention challenges mitigation measures. Under Human Resources Department, emerging sub-themes were; exit interview intelligence, recruitment and selection processes and good induction policies. The sub-theme for the university staff themselves was university leadership and staff. The sub-themes for strategic partners were partnership with various organisations and creating linkages with other organisations.

### **Human Resources Department: using exit interview intelligence to retain staff**

In terms of how the Human Resources department can mitigate staff retention challenges faced by the studied universities, Case 1 Returnee Lecturer 3 underlined the importance of conducting exit interviews with quitting staff. He indicated that through data provided by exit interview intelligence interviews, a university is able to know the reasons that increase lecturers' desire to quit their jobs. In this study, the researcher was fortunate enough to be given an opportunity to read exit interview reports in two public universities showing why one female lecturer and one male lecturer quit jobs in Cases 1 and 4 respectively. Private universities denied the researcher the chance to read theirs. An analysis of the two situations enable one to perceive that public universities stand to learn from what quitting lecturers indicate as job dissatisfiers or push factors better than their private university counterparts. On the last note, Case 2 HR participant once said, in regard to human relations issue:

*...some staff when we are not in good terms. So they do not fill in exit interview reports.*

The above findings are a reflection of unsound relations between quitting lecturers and university managers. For public universities' quitting lecturers release their displeasure by filling in exit interview forms, thereby informing their universities about the need to employ synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges. In that regard, private universities are deprived of vital information to help retain staff because quitting lecturers do not bother to fill in staff exit interview forms.

### **Human Resources Department (HRD): Using proper recruitment and selection procedures and good induction policies to retain staff**

Still on the Human Resources Department's role in retaining staff, Case 2 Returnee Lecturer 1 used her international experience and exposure to make the following comment regarding her private university's staff retention strategies' experiences:

*I think first of all correct hiring of people with appropriate qualifications so that you are not frustrated if you are not thrown in an area you do not know because I have seen that happening , so proper guidelines of hiring correct people in different jobs is a good one.*

The same participant also suggested that HR units should come up with good induction for staff guided by the right policies. These findings disconfirm Coates et al.'s (2009) findings that... a lot of Australian academics ... are less satisfied with their work than international colleagues and possibly other professionals in Australia, notwithstanding proper qualification, expertise and experience. Curran (2012:57) summarises the above findings in this way:

*The recruitment and selection process needs to be redeveloped to put a stronger emphasis on what the institution offers other than the money. The induction process needs to be effective in order for employees to have a sound understanding of their roles and functions. The outsourcing of the recruitment process should be explored.*

The above quotation reveals that effective HR effective recruitment and selection procedures are not based on money alone. Other than money, induction enables staff to become part of the university family, whereas, outsourcing of the recruitment process enables the university staff to share staff retention experiences with newly recruited staff. Therefore, it can be argued on the basis of the above findings and literature that proper recruitment and selection procedures and good induction policies to retain staff are some of the critical synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention strategies in Zimbabwe's public and private universities, and possibly, situationally, in other local and international university and non-university organisations.

### **Involvement of university staff themselves: Involving university leadership and staff in retaining staff**

Staff involvement also emerged as another measure to mitigate staff retention challenges faced by the studied universities. For example, this is how one of the interviewed public universities' participants, Case 4 Returnee Lecturer 1 put it:

*The staff can work with universities to do research projects, do consultancy and then pay themselves a significant amount of money for the portion of work. That is the most effective... you retain people that are working.*

The argument raised in the preceding findings makes a lot of sense. This is because the idea of retaining everybody because they are working does not make a lot of sense, but let people work hard to produce something so that they can be paid for their effort. Thus, it could be sustainable to introduce and use performance-based pay to retain staff. They confirm Kellough and Luis' (1993) findings in Pitts et al. (2011) that, the standard argument behind performance-based pay has been that employees who are not rewarded for doing a good job will not be motivated to work hard to the next levels of their careers. The same authors go on to point out that on one hand, the employees may leave as they see poor performers rewarded at the same level as high performers. On the other hand, the same writers argue that poor performers may be more comfortable with an organisation that does not differentiate employees at different levels, which would make them less likely to leave. Personal and documentary observations at the research sites indicate that universities are not yet implementing Kellough and Luis' (1993) suggestions to use performance-based pay to retain staff. Staff members just fill in staff appraisal forms twice a year, a practice that does not categorise staff according to performance and rewards. Universities do not seem to exercise issues of equity and merit in rewarding their workers. Under such circumstances, synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges are a rare phenomenon, resulting in staff loss rather staff retention.

### **Using university partnerships to retain staff**

Returnee Lecturers raised the issue of strategic partners as a means of alleviating staff retention challenges faced by their universities. For example, the following recommendations were made by two private university Returnee Lecturer participants. Case 2 Lecturer 1;

*The university needs to partner with other organisations in various sectors of the economy and the world. These partnerships can become sources of funding for study grants or scholarship support.*

The implication of the above finding is that securing partnerships for provision of funding for scholarships and study grants may be one of the effective staff retention strategies, especially, synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges in the studied universities.

### **Creating linkages with other institutions to retain staff**

Regarding the extent to which creating linkages with other institutions to retain staff in the context of a private university, Case 3 Returnee Lecturer 1 proposed that;

*...universities should create linkages with other institutions such as universities and donors in order to get funding and staff retention activities making home best instead of people moving to greener pastures.*

By implication, university linkages with other institutions boost the studied universities' funding reserves in search of retaining their staff. The above finding from a private university's background appears to generate new knowledge in the existing body of knowledge in the area of staff retention strategies,

particularly, synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges experienced in public and private universities in the context of Zimbabwe.

## **Summary**

### **Measures to mitigate staff retention challenges faced by Zimbabwe's public and private universities**

Regarding synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges in public and private universities from the Returnee Lecturers' perspective, five major measures emerged from the study namely, 1) Human Resources Department: using exit interview intelligence to retain staff, 2) Human Resources Department (HRD): Using proper recruitment and selection procedures and good induction policies to retain staff, 3) Involvement of university staff themselves: Involving university leadership and staff in retaining staff, 4) Using university partnerships to retain staff and 4) Creating linkages with other institutions to retain staff. The summary of the key findings is as given below.

#### **(a) Human Resources Department: using exit interview intelligence to retain staff**

Synergistic measures to alleviate staff retention challenges faced by Zimbabwe's public and private universities using Human Resources Department: using exit interview intelligence to retain staff, according to the perspective of the Returnee Lecturers was a reflection of how well the lecturers related with the university management. The willingness or reluctance to fill in the staff exit forms by quitting lecturers was indicative of the extent to which the universities were prepared to retain staff.

#### **(b) Human Resources Department (HRD): Using proper recruitment and selection procedures and good induction policies to retain staff**

HR units should come up with good induction for staff guided by the right policies. Effective HR effective recruitment and selection procedures are not based on money alone. Other than money, induction enables staff to become part of the university family, whereas, outsourcing of the recruitment process enables the university staff to share staff retention experiences with newly recruited staff.

#### **(c) Involvement of university staff themselves: Involving university leadership and staff in retaining staff**

Staff can be actively involved in retaining themselves. Leadership can create a conducive environment in which workers can feel proud to be associated with. The staff can engage in research and consultancy work in other organisations to boost their income, research growth and enhance their promotional opportunities in search of career growth.

#### **(d) Using university partnerships to retain staff**

Universities can reap benefits through collaborating with other organisations in research and consultancy work in their bid to retain staff. The partnerships can be a source of funds for scholarships, research, staff development and loans meant to keep staff motivated and satisfied.

#### **(e) Creating linkages with other institutions to retain staff**

University linkages with other institutions boost the studied universities' funding reserves in search of retaining their staff. When universities link with other universities and donors there is increased likelihood for them to get funding and staff retention activities which make home best instead of people moving to greener pastures.

## **Conclusions**

On the basis of the aforementioned findings, the following five conclusions are made. First, Human Resources Units in both sets of the studied universities stand to learn from their mistakes by relying on information provided by quitting lecturers who would have filled in staff exit interview questionnaires. In that regard, the universities are bound to revisit, revise and revamp their synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges.



Second, proper induction policies orient staff in their job descriptions. The staff members become aware of what is expected of them. ‘They will not be running around like headless chicken.’ Well inducted lecturers derive a sense of satisfaction and motivation from their jobs, thereby, reducing their quit-intention rates.

Third, involvement of staff themselves in staff retention is among cornerstones of mitigating staff retention challenges. When university leaders and staff are deeply involved in mitigating staff retention challenges, they possess shared ownership of the institution and work. By working in symbiosis with each other, the university leaders and lecturers will be rewarded for their active involvement in doing the actual work meant to retain staff. Universities should retain lecturers who actually work and have the capacity to actually pay themselves through hard work.

Fourth, forging partnerships with other universities and organisations is a gateway to enhancement of staff retention in public and private universities. Staff members can be retained by means monetary and non-monetary staff retention strategies.

Fifth, related to forging partnerships with other universities and organisations is the creation of partnerships with other universities and organisations. The creation of partnerships with other universities and organisations broaden the universities’ financial capacities, as well as boosting the morale of lecturers through increased research, staff development and staff exchange programme opportunities.

### **Recommendations**

In the wake of the afore-stated findings and conclusions regarding synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges in the studied universities, from the Returnee Lecturers’ perspective, the researcher makes five recommendations.

1. Public and private universities need to seriously consider the concerns that quitting lecturers write on the staff exit interview questionnaire as a basis for improving their synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges.
2. Public and private universities’ Human Resources Units ought to ensure that all new staff members are adequately and properly inducted in their job descriptions so that they become knowledgeable about their job. Good induction policies act as synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges because workers become self-motivated, committed and satisfied, thus, increasing their chances to stay on their jobs.
3. Universities need to involve staff members in retaining themselves through performance-based pay and possibly, recognised performance-based pay twice a year since lecturers complete performance appraisal forms biennially. The thinking here is that performance-based pay to pay lecturers is among the best strategies to retain lecturers in both kinds of universities.
4. There is strong need for the universities to forge partnerships and collaborations with other universities, schools, colleges, business community, and other local and international organisations. Such partnerships and collaborations buttress their academic, research and community service jobs, as well as broadening their financial base, staff development, staff exchange programmes, twinning degree programmes and collaborative research and consultancy work.
5. Future investigations regarding synergistic measures to mitigate staff retention challenges need to cover all public and private universities in Zimbabwe and combine quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

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