

# Strategies used by the University of Zambia to retain the academic staff in 1990 -2016

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**Abstract:** This study sought to investigate the strategies that the University of Zambia (UNZA) employed to retain lecturers during the period 1990 to 2016. In order to do so, the following specific objective was framed namely to: Establish strategies that UNZA used in the retention of lecturers. Considering that motivation is critical to academic staff, the study was guided by Maslow's theory of motivation. There were 137 respondents who were purposively sampled using probability and non-probability sampling procedure with stratified random and purposive sampling respectively. Quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science version 20 (SPSS) and qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. The key findings of the study revealed that conditions of service at UNZA during the period 1990 to 2016 were not favourable to retain staff. Some institutional programmes were disrupted and there was demoralisation among lecturers. Top administrators revealed that lack of finances for a range of activities and amenities, such as attractive salaries, pension benefits, workshops and seminars, accommodation and office space, housing and lecture rooms partly contributed to lecturers leaving the university.

**Key words:** retention, strategy, job satisfaction, motivation

## I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The most valuable asset available to an organisation is its people or human resource; thus, retention of staff in their jobs is essential for an institution. Social, economic, and political developments coupled with the processes of globalisation and developments in the area of information and communication technologies have contributed towards the flow of highly skilled individuals from one end of the world to the other (Watkins, 2013). In the early 1990s, Zambia lost some academic staff to other institutions within the region and abroad. Some lecturers left for these places because their conditions of service were better than UNZA's. The deteriorating economic conditions in Zambia, due to structural adjustment programmes and global economic restructuring, (Kelly, 2006) made the academic staff leave UNZA for other institutions or countries abroad where conditions of service were better. For many African countries, Zambia in particular, the pressure to keep up with external debt payments forced the government to reduce funding for the university. A wage freeze was introduced by the government on all its workers and institutions that benefitted from government grants (Lungu, 2006; Nyirenda and Shikwe, 2015). This demoralised employees in the country including lecturers at UNZA.

There was poverty in the countries of origins of lecturers who migrated and therefore they looked to other countries which did not have enough qualified personnel but offered good salaries (Gberevbie, 2009; Osibanjo et al. 2014). Qualified staff at the Zambian university did moonlighting activities in order to survive. Many times, lecturers negotiated with the management to improve their salaries but they were not given due consideration, and they then resorted to strikes, work stoppage or exit to other institutions or countries. Osabiya (2015) adds that it had led to many employees leaving the profession or the country to take up jobs that were more motivating. Those who worked in the university experienced too much dissatisfaction and a low morale to continue working. During the 1990s, Private and individual organisations joined in the offering of the University education. The University however used some strategies which are outlined in this document to retain lecturers.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs argued that individuals were motivated to satisfy a number of different kinds of needs, some of which were more pressing than others. This became the foundation for the content theories of motivation. Maslow's theory argues that individuals are motivated to satisfy a number of different kinds of needs, some of which are more powerful than others. Some needs are regarded as being more pressing than others. He argues that until these more pressing needs are satisfied, other needs are of little effect on an individual's behaviour. Individuals satisfy the most pressing needs first and then progress to the less pressing ones. According to Maslow, as one need is satisfied, and therefore becomes less important, other needs loom up and become motivators of man's behaviour. He presented this pre-potency of needs as a hierarchy. The most pre-potent needs were shown at the bottom of the ladder with pre-potency decreasing as one progressed upwards. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is shown below:

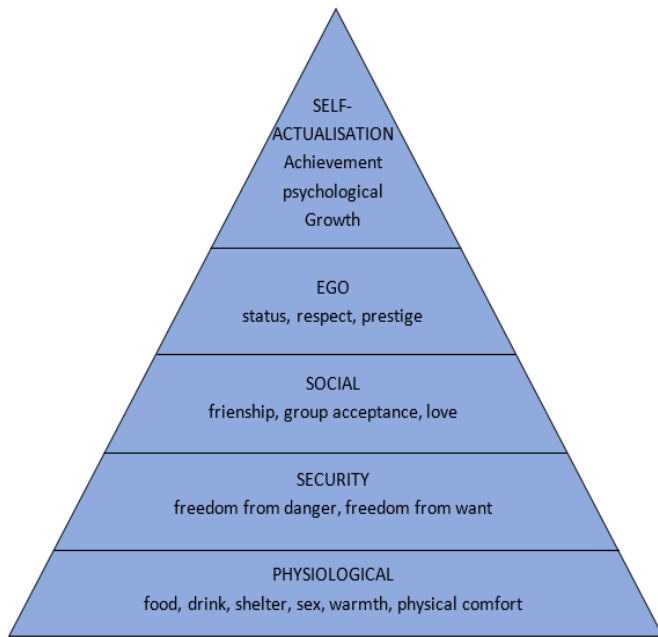


Figure 1: Maslow (1970), Motivation and Personality

The first needs that one must satisfy are the physiological needs. Maslow observed that physiological needs are the most basic of all needs. They are also called survival needs. What this means specifically is that if the human being is missing everything in life in an extreme fashion, it is most likely that the major motivation would be the physiological needs rather than any other. Cole and Kelly (2015) postulate that a person who lacked food, security, love and esteem would probably hunger for food more strongly than anything else. A person cannot go to the other levels without first attending to basic needs.

Once the first level needs are satisfied, the next level of requirements emerges. Individuals become concerned with the need for safety and security. This relates to the need for shelter, clothing, and protection from all potentially dangerous or uncomfortable things like weather, vehicles, fire, and flood. To this needs scenario, (Dessler, 2017) adds that psychological safety factors such as pension, health insurance and unemployment are important and would make one to feel secured or safe in life.

After the above needs have been satisfied, the individual becomes concerned with belonging or social needs. This consists of a sense of membership to a group. A person feels keenly to socialise with friends, family or members of the department. Cole and Kelly (2015) concludes that there is a hunger for friendly relationships with people one is working with.

When there is a feeling that the individual belongs somewhere, then the next thing that happens is motivation by a desire to be held in esteem. Robbins and Coulter (2018) adds that people want to be promoted, want to be in power, certain reputable position, recognised and to be seen important

at the place of work. People need to be thought of as valuable by others, to be recognised as people with some value. They also have a strong need to see themselves as worthwhile people. Without this type of self-concept, one sees oneself as drifting, cut off, pointless. Much of this dissatisfaction with certain types of jobs centres on the fact that they seem undignified and therefore harmful to their self-concept. When all of these needs have been satisfied to some extent, people are motivated by a desire for self-actualisation.

The need for self-actualisation refers to the desire for self-fulfilment of full human potential. This trend might be paraphrased as the desire to become more and more what one is capable of becoming. Explained in other words; to one person it may mean helping others while to another it may involve achievement in an artistic or creative field (Hopper, 2019). People spend all their time and vigour on the things they most love to do in life.

The physiological, security and social needs are partially met by a person's situation under rational and bureaucratic models of administration. These needs can also be met by socialisation and family life outside of work. However, the self-actualisation needs are neglected by rationalists and bureaucrats. The loss of meaning in work was not attributed to neglect of a person's social needs as much as a person's inability to use their talent entirely. Factors which are related to the work were called intrinsic because they led to job satisfaction. These were achievement, recognition, work itself and responsibility and advancement. Factors that were associated with the environment at the work place were company policy, administration, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations and working conditions.

Certainly, lower order needs were not to be deprived of but man's capacity for growth and challenge received the greatest attention by human resource theorists (Hollensbe et al., 2014). These needs would vary from one person to another. In one individual it may be expressed as a desire to become an ideal teacher, athlete, mother, among others. Maslow's model of motivation does not mean that individuals experience one type of need at a time. In fact, we probably experience all levels of needs all the time, only at varying degrees. For instance, hunger in many parts of the world, especially Africa, is a genuine reality but we have all experienced the phenomenon of not being able to concentrate on a job because of a rumbling stomach. After eating, food is not uppermost in people's minds but perhaps rest is, as a sense of sleepiness comes in. Maslow's five needs are not uniformly motivating. People have different kinds of needs at a given time and they need to be motivated differently.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGIES FOR RETAINING EMPLOYEES

#### *a. Improving Job Satisfaction and Enhancing Organisational Commitment*

The retention process was designed to increase employees' control over their work, thereby improving job satisfaction and enhancing organisational commitment. Retention has varied from university to university and from department to department within universities. Employee retention is not a new concept. It has always been part of the transition in Higher Education Institutions. The increasing demands may even be expected to increase as the number of students grows substantially.

Meeting the expectations of employees and staying up-to-date with the job prospects for new and existing employees, to the level which other organisations meet these expectations, is demanded for employee retention. Selesho (2014) purports that exploration of employee retention literature revealed that efforts to retain employees are focused more on employees with core competencies or in core business units.

In the United States, for instance, about 7.7 % of all full-time academic staff left their institutions within one academic year from 1997 to 1998, (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 2001). In Canada, it has been argued that one of the challenges that the university would face over the next decade or so is academic recruitment and retention. Similarly, it has been suggested that "early in the 21st century there would be crisis in Australian higher education with an estimated labour shortage of 20,000 if this trend was not addressed" (Mathews, 2003). These circumstances were also experienced in South American higher education institutions, since data indicate that a substantial number (between 5% and 18%) of academics leave higher education institutions (Tetty, 2006).

In Saudi Arabia the Ministry of Education affirms as cited in the study of Habhab and Smith (2014) that the recruitment and retention of foreign talent is a challenging issue for management in the higher education sector. Employee retention is one of the most critical issues facing organisational managers because of the shortage of skilled workers, economic growth, and high employee turnover (Samuel and Chipunza, 2013). Once an organisation has captured skilled employees, the return on investment requires closing the back door to prevent them from walking out. Employees are more likely to remain with the organisation if they believe that the organisation shows more interest and concern for them, if they know what is expected of them, if they are given a role that fit their capabilities, and if they receive regular positive feedback and recognition. Employees feel comfortable remaining longer in positions where they were well informed on relevant issues concerning the organisation and their well-being.

Tithe (2010) contributed that retention strategies across different companies have many common features, such as competitive pay, good working environment, and progressive human resource policies that offer opportunities for advancement; they needed to be context-specific and evidence-based to be more effective. Mandhanya (2015) adds that an appropriate understanding of employees' expectations

of their work environments is a critical issue in higher education institutions' ability to retain academic employees, hence the problem of academic staff retention was a global one, which affects both developing and industrialised countries.

#### *b. Staff Development*

No academic institution could really ensure sustainability and quality in the long run without a well-qualified and committed academic staff. Higher education institutions depend on the intellectual and creative abilities and commitment of the academic staff than most other organisations. This therefore makes it critically important to retain intellectual staff. Amutuhaire (2010) stated that the academic staff have roles which are crucial and their number, quality and effectiveness makes the difference in university education production function and to the wider society.

#### *c. Motivation and Training*

Another key factor to employee satisfaction is implementing formal training programmes that provide employees with clear paths for advancement. Employees are more likely to remain loyal to businesses committed to staff development and promotion from within. Induction training and socialisation are carried out, which are vital in gaining employee commitment. According to Jon (2012), it is essential to reinforce a sense of self-worth within newcomers, which could be achieved through a supportive environment.

Pienaar (2008) asserted that the crucial role of the university education was to prepare most of the professionals who develop, lead, manage, teach, and influence society's institutions. In today's competitive global market, the only strategy for organisations to improve workforce productivity radically and enhance retention is to seek to optimise their workforce through comprehensive training and development programmes. In order to accomplish this undertaking, organisations need to invest in vast resources to ensure that employees have the information, skills and competences they needed to work effectively in a complex and rapidly changing environment. It is therefore important for organisations to invest in their human resource or human capital development which in general terms is the process of helping employees become better at their tasks, their knowledge and their experiences and add value to their lives. Osibanjo *et al.* (2014) stated that this is achieved through training, education and development.

According to Chew (2014), training is considered a form of human capital investment whether that investment was made by the individual or by the firm. Training provides employees with specific skills, help to correct deficiencies in their performance. The purpose of training in the work context is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future manpower needs of the organisation. Waleed (2011) further asserted that training is not simply a means of arming employees with skills they need to perform their jobs.

It was also often deemed to be representative of an employer's commitment to their workforce. It may also be perceived to reflect an overall organisational strategy that involve adding increased value as opposed to reducing cost. Universities must have clear training policies, outlining their strategies for human resource development because this would motivate employees greatly.

#### *d. Compensation*

This can be done intrinsically or extrinsically. Akhtar *et al.*, (2015) pointed out that allowances are determined individually such as performance bonuses and other packages that they negotiated for. Employees were given extrinsic rewards in order to motivate them to stay longer (Bayraktaetal., 2016). Employee retention was considered as the heart of an organisational success. Employees without motivation would perform poorly or leave for other institutions that have attractive incentives. Employees who are satisfied would be stimulated to remain with the organisation for the maximum period of time, thereby reducing turnover and the associated expenses of hiring, training and orientation of the new employees (Igbal and Hashmi, 2015).

#### *e. Hiring and Mentorship*

According to Esemé (2010), hiring the right people from the start would reduce turnover. Recruiting effective teaching candidates that are qualified could reduce staff shortage, and then sufficient mentoring could be provided to help them make the transition into full-time teaching (Yuki, 2010). Mentoring could come from supervisors in the departments. Managers should have a clear idea of the types of people they want to hire for each position, write detailed job descriptions and commit to hiring the best candidates rather than the first candidates who meet minimum requirements.

#### *f. Good communication and feedback*

Good communication and feedback promote retention. Cania (2014) posited that good communication and feedback between management and employees is a means to reduce turnover. A positive relationship between communication and commitment was detected highlighting the importance for management to ensure that communication channels remain open to allow for better transmission of information. Therefore, employees may wish to discuss and express their concerns with their immediate superiors. Akkerman *et al.* (2015) asserted that bringing the problems that employees have to the manager's attention would indeed benefit the employee as they could work together to make any special arrangements in mutual agreement. When employees interact with their superiors, the manager would be able to determine the employees' level of job satisfaction and in turn determine their level of commitment.

#### *g. Leadership Policies*

Good Leadership practices lead to employees' satisfaction. Musah and Nkuah (2013) asserted that by understanding the

nature of the retention problems, an institution could decide whether to adopt targeted retention initiatives to manage overall levels so that there is sufficient labour. George (2015) states that it is vital to involve staff in the organisational process that not only empowers them but also increases their loyalty to and identification with the institution.

There are also cases when the employees leave because of their fellow employees or the superiors. Clashes of personalities are common in the institutions. Naqshbandi and Kaur (2014) observed that when an employee can no longer stand the tension in the workplace, he or she may opt to leave the organisation. Additionally, it does not matter if he or she finally gets his dream job or receives a generous pay check, if he or she no longer has peace of mind, they would look for another job. The relationship between employee and employer or their direct supervisor is crucial. Not only do organisations need a performance management system that recognises and rewards supervisors for meeting objectives that reduce employee turnover; supervisors too need to understand what steps they can take to meet their responsibility in employee retention and job satisfaction. The only way to truly understand employees is to ask them what they want and to find out what could be done to help them reach their goals. Bell and Menguc (2016); Aşkun (2016) emphasised that by asking them to become involved, and being accountable, supervisors could go a long way in improving employee job satisfaction as well as retention. Leadership could play a pivotal role in curbing attrition. Poor leadership led to people leaving organisations (Dessler, 2013; Robbins and Coulter, 2018).

A change in the workplace environment should change the style of the manager too. In addition, leaders need to appreciate open discussions, have a welcoming attitude and promote workers. Transformational managers can affect the organisation by creating new ways to engage employees, inspire motivation and solve old problems. This kind of leadership style empowers workers to retrieve their hidden skills and talent. Furthermore, in Kenya, Ng'ethe (2013) conducted a study on how leadership contributed to retention of lecturers. He asserted that leadership style contributed greatly in retaining workers.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

In this study, a mixed method approach and the convergent parallel design were used. Questionnaires and interviews were used for data collection. Data was collected concurrently. The pragmatic philosophy was adopted because it can combine both positivism and interpretivism positions. The study targeted 137 key respondents. 120 Lecturers were purposely sampled and 17 administrators were selected using stratified sampling technique. Probability and non-probability sampling procedures were used in this study and non-sampling procedures were used since it took a mixed approach. Quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package

for Social Science version 20 (SPSS) and qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis.

## V. RESULTS

The research followed the following question: What Strategies did UNZA use to retain the academic staff?

The study sought to establish the strategies that the University of Zambia used in retaining its academic staff. The responses were shown in Table 1

Table 1: Strategies used by UNZA in retaining its academic staff

Responses of participants	F	%
Paying salaries and allowances on time	37	60
Renewing contracts	8	10
Opportunities for staff development	10	15
Improved academic staff welfare	10	15
Total	65	100

(Source: Field work, 2018)

It was revealed from the study that 37 (60%) of the respondents attributed retention of lecturers to the paying of salaries and allowances on time. While Eight (10%) of the respondents cited renewing of contracts as a means which UNZA used to retain its lecturers, 10 (15%) respondents pointed out staff development as a way the institution used to retain its lecturers. Another 10 (15%) respondents cited improved academic staff welfare to have helped the retention of lecturers.

### a) Ways in which UNZA could improve retention of lecturers

The participants were asked to give ways in which UNZA could improve retention of lecturers.

Views of respondents were shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Ways in which UNZA could use to improve retention of Lecturers

Promotion to be done on merit	10	11
Sponsoring lecturers for short courses, seminars and conferences	5	6
Introducing incentives like loans and salary advances to lecturers	8	10
Invest in infrastructure	10	11
Better conditions of service	17	20
Invest in research programmes	15	17
Paying gratuity and other benefits on time	12	14
Secure and improved accommodation	10	11
Total	87	100

(Source: Field work, 2018)

According to the findings, 10 (11%) respondents felt promotions at UNZA should be done on merit, while five (6%) pointed out sponsoring lecturers for short courses, seminars and conferences would go a long way in motivating

them to remain at the institution. Eight (10%) of the respondents pointed out introducing incentives like loans and salary advances to the lecturers while 10 (11%) cited investing in university infrastructure as a way of attracting lecturers to remain in the institution. Furthermore, 17 (20%) of the respondents pointed out that improving conditions of service for the academic staff would go a long way in ensuring that a good number of lecturers were retained at UNZA while 15 (17%) mentioned investing in research programmes at the university as oneway lecturers would be motivated to remain at the institution. Paying gratuity and other benefits on time was cited by 12 (14%) respondents and 10 (11%) cited secure and improved accommodation as motivating factors that would enable lecturers stay at the institution.

### b) Other possible ways to enhance retention of lecturers at UNZA

Besides what respondents proposed as ways which could be used to retain lecturers at UNZA, participants of the study identified other ways that could be used to enhance retention. Table 3 shows the responses of lecturers on other possible ways that UNZA could use to improve retention of lecturers:

Table 3: Possible ways to enhance retention of lecturers at UNZA

Responses of lecturers	F	%
Employing of lecturers on permanent basis than contracts	20	31
Provide scholarships to the members of staff	15	23
Conducive and secure work environment	15	23
Improved teaching and learning materials	15	23
Total	65	100

(Source: Field work, 2018)

From the study, it was revealed that 20 (31%) of the respondents proposed that UNZA could employ more lecturers on permanent basis than putting them on contracts whereas 15 (23%) suggested that the university could provide scholarships to the academic members of staff. Furthermore, 15 (23%) of the respondents suggested that conducive and secure environment which ensured job security could be guaranteed to the academic staff and 15 (23%) proposed improved teaching and learning materials would go a long way in ensuring that lecturers remained at UNZA.

### c) Ways in which UNZA retained lecturers

The study sought to collect the views of administrators on the strategies that UNZA used to retain the lecturers.

The responses of administrators were summarised in the table below:

Table 4: Responses of participants on how UNZA retains its lecturers

Responses of administrators on how UNZA retain its lecturers	F	%
Improved conditions of service	8	40
Support professional development activities	6	30
Improved accommodation	3	15
Research funding	3	15
Total	20	100

(Source: Field work, 2018)

It was found that eight (40%) said improved conditions of service would go a long way in retaining lecturers at UNZA while six (30%) of the respondents wanted to see more support for professional development activities take place at the campus. Improved accommodation for lecturers was cited by three (15%) of the total respondents who took part in the study. Furthermore, increased funding to research activities was cited by three (15%) respondents.

*d) Possible ways UNZA could use to improve the management of lecturers*

Respondents were asked on other possible ways that the institution’s management could use to improve the management and retention of lecturers at the institution.

This is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Possible ways UNZA could use to improve management of lecturers

Possible ways UNZA could use to improve management of lecturers	F	%
Paying contractual gratuities on time	4	25
Exchange of lecturers with other institutions	4	25
Employing of part time lecturers	8	50
Total	16	100

(Source: Field work, 2018)

It was noticed that four (25%) of the respondents wanted to see UNZA paying its contractual obligations such as gratuities to its lecturers on time. The other four (25%) pointed out that UNZA should have and improve on its exchange programmes with other institution as a way of capacity building, and eight (50%) lecturers cited employing of part-time lecturers as a way of reducing the deficit that the institution had in as far as improving the staffing levels at UNZA were concerned.

*e) Coping strategies UNZA used in the absence of lecturers*

The study sought to collect the views of administrators on the possible mechanisms used as coping strategies to mitigate the impact of academic staff retention.

The responses of administrators were summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Opinions of administrators on coping strategies UNZA used in the absence of lecturers

Opinions of administrators on coping strategies UNZA used in the absence of lecturers	F	%
Staff development programmes	4	24
Offering competitive salaries	4	24
Stable contracts	9	52
Total	17	100

(Source: Field work, 2018)

The study showed that four (24%) of the respondents mentioned staff development programmes for the already available lecturers, four (24%) cited offering of competitive salaries to the available academic staff so that they became motivated and nine (52%) indicated that stable contracts helped the institution in coping with the available academic staff at the university.

*f) Other staff retention strategies UNZA could use*

The administrators were asked about other possible strategies that the institution could use to retain its staff.

Table 7 shows the responses which were given on other possible strategies for retaining lecturers:

Table 7: Responses from administrator participants on how UNZA could retain its staff

Strategies UNZA could use to retain lecturers	F	%
Improving of university infrastructure	5	29
Better and modern teaching and learning resources	8	47
Improve library and internet facilities	4	24
Total	17	100

(Source: Field work, 2018)

It was discovered that five (29%) pointed at improving on the university infrastructure, eight (47%) cited better and modern teaching and learning resources at the university and four (24%) pointed out improved library and internet facilities at the institution would go a long way in retaining lecturers at the institution.

*g) Relationships*

There are many ways of retaining lecturers at UNZA. **Lect.3** (2016) outlined the measures undertaken by the university.

First, it is important to prepare the supervisors and administrators in the university to lead and to develop effective relationships with their subordinates. He cited an example of what happens in other institutions where individual contributors are promoted to managerial positions based solely on their performance on technical aspects of the job - not on their supervisory abilities. Improved relationships between managers and lecturers would make the latter happy and work effectively in the university.

#### h) *Paying salaries and gratuities*

The participants further revealed that paying gratuity on time, salary increments, study leave and renewal of contracts would help retain lecturers. **Lect. 1** (2016) had this to say:

*Lecturers could not be retained because the conditions of service were not attractive between 1990 and 2010. Lecturers left for neighbouring countries, which had attractive salaries. UNZA had no competitive remunerations and workers were not happy. But now in 2016, we have competitive salaries in the region, a home scheme, medical insurance, co-ordinating and transport allowance which help us to be retained.*

Conditions of service should be attractive. For instance, paying gratuity, salaries and pension benefits on time would help in retaining lecturers. However, some retired lecturers still appeared on the payroll and this made the wage bill too big.

**Admin 1** (2016) added:

*The union sold plots to lecturers from Liempe Farm as a way of motivating them. The lecturers are paid for any excess teaching load to motivate them for some huge classes they attend to especially in the School of Education.*

#### i) *Staff development policies*

Staff development programmes would contribute to retention of lecturers because they would have adequate knowledge to teach at the university. The staff retention policy should be developed effectively and must be clear. Staff development system and programmes must be revamped. It was observed by some respondents that Staff Development Fellow (policy) should be revised to allow young lecturers to access scholarships and study leave. Though the university offers Masters and PhD programmes, some of those programmes took long and lecturers wanted to study for a short time. The participants suggested that there should be staff development and lecturers should attend workshops and seminars in order to acquire more knowledge.

#### j) *Infrastructure*

Infrastructure, if improved, could help in the retention of lecturers. Improved lecture theatres, laboratories, adequate office space and accommodation would make lecturers satisfied and stay longer at the university. Teaching and learning materials must be improved. Use of new technology must be implemented. More lecturers should be employed. The academic staff must not be overworked because they need time for research.

#### k) *Promotions*

When lecturers are given incentives for their outstanding performance, they feel appreciated and they will work hard. The supervisors should identify those who are dedicated to their duties. Lecturers, especially those who have many

contact sessions, ought to be motivated. Good performers must be acknowledged for their dedication to service by promoting them. **Admin 2** (2016) said:

*Promotion has been a big challenge due to lack of objectivity. The university is too consultative. The university has three pillars of promotions: teaching, research and community service. If somebody taught well and participated in community service without having enough publication, that person might not be promoted. It was not clear how many publications one needed in order to be promoted.*

The university was subjective in its promotional style. Promotion encourages hard work, commitment and good results. If the conditions are improved, lecturers would stay longer at the university. It was suggested by the participants that routine promotions must be clear. They suggested that a lecturer with a teaching load that would make one stand pressure was a good measurement for promotion.

#### l) *Recruitment*

Evidence from the findings suggests that recruitment practices strongly influence turnover. **Admin 3** had this to say:

*Lecturers were recruited through three ways: Staff Development Fellow, advertising and head hunting. There are two sets of lecturers: pensionable and non-pensionable. Those who are below 50 years are pensionable. Those who are over 50 years work on contracts.*

Findings from this research show that presenting applicants with realistic job previews during the recruitment process has a positive effect on retention of those recruited. The findings revealed that a realistic job preview presented accurate information about the positive characteristics and potential challenges associated with any job, as well as clear details about performance expectations and the institution's performance management processes. Once this was done, it could help employees adjust easily to their new work environment.

#### m) *Compensation and rewards*

The findings of this study show that the university also used poor compensation and rewards that could not make lecturers stay at the institution. **Admin 4** (2016) had this to say:

*Conditions of service were not good between 1990 and 2010. Lecturers had no vehicles like today. There was a closure in 1998 for eight (8) months and lecturers did not get their salaries for two months.*

The rewards offered by the university obviously play a critical role in the inducement contributions balance described earlier, which we can also think of as the employee value proposition. One respondent (2016) warned that to fail to offer competitive rewards may put the university at a disadvantage in terms of attracting and retaining talent.

The findings of this study disclose that at the same time, pay levels and pay satisfactions are only modest predictors of employees' turnover decisions. As stated earlier, thus, there is need to carefully consider how to use rewards to retain employees. Incentives are given to make lecturers stay longer. It was revealed through the interviews with administrators that incentives such as housing, health care, car loans, teaching and learning materials, as well as office space were in short supply. If lecturers were not well motivated, they would quit their jobs or lower their performance.

#### *n) Supervision*

It is also common for people to leave their jobs due to strained work relationships with their supervisors. This research supports this claim as **Lect. 2** (2016) pointed out:

*The quality of employees' relationships with their supervisors is an important driver of turnover. Evidence also suggests that a worker's satisfaction with his or her supervisor(s), the quality of the exchanges between them, and fair treatment by supervisors is related to retention.*

This study found that fair treatment by supervisors was more important than the distribution of outcomes in predicting turnover.

## VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings generated by this study revealed the following strategies discussed below:

#### *a) Offering competitive salaries and other allowances*

Lecturer and administrator respondents were asked to give various approaches UNZA could have used to retain its academic staff. Atomsa and Raju (2014); Mullins (2016) cited paying of salaries and other related allowances on time as motivators to retain the academic staff. Participants suggested that salaries, gratuity, and retirement benefits if paid promptly could have retained Lecturers. Salaries of academic staff were oftentimes not paid on time, leading to demoralisation and this might have caused go-slows. At the same time, retired staff that still appeared on payrolls blocked the administration from employing more teaching staff. The retired UNZA lecturers appeared on two payrolls. Some had even died without getting their benefits. Though UNZA had managed to pay off some, it still had the challenges of a number of retired people not getting their benefits.

This was in line with Maslow's theory which stated that when people got their salaries, they felt satisfied and motivated in their work. This acted as a motivator. They got encouraged to go on working because they could have food on the table. This was also in line with the theoretical framework of Maslow, theory. If the basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs were missing, the workers could not go to the next level of needs. They could remain at the same level until they were satisfied. Hawken (2014) added that lack of basic needs could even lead to riots because of frustration.

In Zambia, during the period under discussion, there was an economic depression and workers' salaries could not be increased because of a wage freeze. This financial hopelessness of UNZA administration demotivated lecturers (Van Lerberghe *et al.*, 2002).

The views of lecturers were not far from those of the administrators in regard to retention of lecturers. This implied that these approaches if well implemented by UNZA management could go a long way in the retention of lecturers at the institution.

The study therefore ascertained that attractive incentives and remunerations could attract people to remain and work for the university. The institutional and administrative culture of any university if well utilised could motivate, make employees work harder and stay longer because they could feel cared for.

#### *b) Staff development programmes*

The study collected views of lecturers and administrators on the strategies UNZA could use to retain lecturers. Many participants suggested that staff development programmes could help the academic staff to improve on their skills. Career growth, learning, and development were the three top reasons that made people stay in their jobs. A "good" boss provides opportunities for development in their career. The managers encourage employees to improve the work itself as well as their skills and to keep up with the latest developments in their field. Dockel (2003) stressed that investment in training was one way to show employees how important they were. Herman (2013) also affirmed that an institution that paid and supported employee development could generously pay for academic and training courses. Onward staff training is one way of improving skills and knowledge for lecturers so that teaching could be improved. If lecturers went for studies, they could be assured of being promoted.

Providing formal training and development opportunities was only one means of helping employees to learn and grow. Coaching, mentoring, and providing informal learning opportunities on the job could be done regularly (Australian Public Service Commission, 2017). In the early 1990s, UNZA academic staff used to go abroad for their higher qualifications such as Doctorate degrees. But later, the institution started offering these qualifications internally except when somebody had a scholarship. UNZA offered studies for Doctoral or Masters Degrees to its lecturers free of charge but a beneficiary should have worked for at least two years to join the programme. This was one way of retaining academic staff.

This was in line with the Maslow's theory where a person would feel actualised because of the fulfilment that he or she gets through studies. The person is also respected besides being promoted. Staff development programmes could enhance retention of lecturers because they get adequate knowledge to teach at the university. Masaiti and Naluyele (2011) supported the need for UNZA administration to



provide funds for studies and research but added that bonding could have helped to retain the academics though terminal benefits were sometimes forfeited.

UNZA had internal brain drain where the academics stopped going outside the country because their salaries were competitive in the region and because the neighbouring countries had their own qualified staff and did not need expatriate staff. The lecturers instead, went to teach in nearby universities because they were qualified enough and there was money which they obtained to supplement their salaries.

Hence, staff development empowered lecturers to even go to nearby universities to teach or to act as consultants in Non-Governmental Organisations because of the skill that they acquired by working at UNZA. Training, therefore, became a motivator in retaining the academic members of staff.

#### *c) Socialisation*

The study findings showed that staff turnover could also have a negative impact on other lecturers by disrupting group socialisation processes and increasing internal conflict, which could trigger additional absenteeism. In addition, the interpersonal bond developed between employees is central to the communication patterns that are characteristic and unique to any institution.

Smits *et al.* (2017) stated that people grew professionally and personally, and that good employers were able to accommodate these changes in the circumstances. A highly satisfied workforce was far more capable of meeting organisational goals and customer needs than an apathetic and uninspired one.

Overall, the picture presented by the results of this study indicated that staff turnover in organisations created gaps in social groupings. Staff turnover might have caused academics to be mobile and to be continuously drawn to administrative portfolios and management positions within universities. Some diverted to research and some went for consultative works while others got involved with the private sectors (Dube and Ngulube, 2013). However, [Sucherand Gupta](#) (2018) cautioned that job-hopping usually exerts pressure on organisations' stability and sustainability because those who leave are supposed to be paid their dues, to be replaced, and skills are to be developed for new hires. Experience and productivity from the lecturers who leave is therefore lost.

Exciting, challenging and meaningful work that made a difference or a contribution to society were cited by respondents as some of the most important factors in job satisfaction. These could have been related to important factors such as the need to feel connected to a group or team, in that they revealed a desire connected to one's work and to the larger society through one's work. Mullins (2016) contributed that managers and lecturers could work as a team in order to achieve their objectives. Teamwork and the help lecturers got from their peers could have been promoted and

uplifted. Lecturers, through community work, found time to socialise with other people.

The lecturers socialised in the staff canteen through playing indoor games such as chess, or darts. Through the teams which they formed; they could compete against each other. At the Senior Staff Canteen, there was a restaurant and bar just for lecturers. The union held various activities such as Labour Day and end of year parties just to bring lecturers together. The academic staff had a social platform for communicating what was going on at their institution. Socialisation made lecturers to learn more about each other and their institution.

#### *d) Stable contracts*

The administrator participants highlighted the possible ways of improving staff retention. They held that steady contracts were one way of motivating lecturers at UNZA. This is vital as any person working for an institution needs to be valued and appreciated by attending to his or her needs on time. This could result in high motivation levels and morale to keep on contributing to the growth of the institution and consequently bringing about job satisfaction (Mapolisa, 2015). Respondents suggested that long-term contracts were important, especially to the young ones. The securing of employment was important. Lecturers used to be on two, then four-year contracts. This was not good enough for the young ones who were always worried about their jobs and the renewal of their contracts. If one was not in good terms with the supervisor, there was worry of whether their contract would be renewed.

This was in line with Maslow's hierarchy of needs where psychological, safety needs such as security were important and could make an employee to be secured or not secured. This was also supported by Dessler (2017), who asserted that security of employment is significant to an employee. If one felt insecure, there could have been no commitment to work because there was no ownership to work. Highly qualified lecturers found it easier to go to organisations where there was security of employment.

Therefore, stable contracts were suggested as a way of improving retention. Unstable contracts contribute to turnover, especially among young lecturers, who are always worried about the security of their jobs, and often decide to leave and went somewhere where attractive conditions of service exist. Lecturers moved to any place in the world, especially in the neighbouring countries which had attractive conditions of work.

#### *e) Promotion*

Both the lecturer and administrator respondents were asked to suggest other possible ways that UNZA could use to ensure that it retains its lecturers. From the given responses, the lecturers indicated that promotion of members of staff should be done on merit. Promotion at UNZA was objective and the university was too consultative. But promotion is based on teaching, research and community service as well as a certain number of publications.

It was suggested by the participants in this research that routine promotions were not clear. The participants complained of the method of promoting the academics that existed at UNZA. They suggested that the size of the class one taught could have been the basis for promotion. For instance, the School of Education had big classes where the lecture theatres were packed to capacity. Lecturers who taught such packed lecture theatres could be promoted because they stood pressure. In addition to this, the academic staff is required to publish articles or books and do community service in order to be promoted. The academicians were, however, not sure as to how many articles one needed to publish in order to be promoted. Tetty (2010) observed that though teaching was said to be an important consideration in promotion decisions, the reality tended to be that research got weighed much more heavily than teaching. This brought a lot of frustration on the academicians that could have been waiting for a long time.

The respondents observed that human development and lecturers should have attended workshops and seminars in order to acquire more knowledge. When lecturers were given incentives for outstanding performance, they felt appreciated and in turn worked hard. Psychological or intangible rewards (intrinsic) such as recognition and appreciation played an important role in motivating employees and raising their performance. Relevantly, the employees' commitment was based on appreciation and rewards (Andrew, 2004). It was added that the supervisors could have identified lecturers who were dedicated to their duties. Those who had many teaching or contact sessions ought to have been motivated. Good performers could have been acknowledged by promoting them. Wright et al. (2014) observed that promotion encourages hard work, commitment and good results, thereby retaining staff.

Saleem *et al.* (2012) added that if an employee with higher education and skills felt that there was no acknowledgement through being given a more enriching job and consequently higher compensation for one's abilities, that employee was likely to quit. In this regard, the staff with good performance could predict that their significant contributions could have been realised and valued by the top managers (Kamalian *et al.*, 2010). The lecturers, who worked hard, those with a sense of duty and intellect, tended to be much more negatively affected by the increased work generated by high staff turnover.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory posited that employees wanted to be held in self-esteem. Employees looked forward to promotions or recognition as people with some value. If the academic staff was not promoted after attaining the highest qualification, they felt frustrated and left the organisation. Employees need to be praised and recognised by superiors. They need to be responsible for the work they are doing. In addition to these theories, the conceptual framework affirms that promotion is significant to the academic staff. The administrative culture of UNZA was that every hard-working lecturer had to be appreciated. This motivated the academic staff and brought about good results.

#### *f) Improvement on exchange programmes with other universities*

UNZA does not work in isolation. It partners with other universities. The respondents therefore suggested that exchange programmes that brought new knowledge could be strengthened. For instance, UNZA had partnered with Zimbabwe University in offering masters and PhD programmes. It had also partnered with China and Japanese governments where the academics could even be given scholarships for further studies or workshops and seminars as this is another avenue through which academic staff could be able to do research in the absence of local funding. Exchange of lecturers with other universities could bring about development to UNZA because new skills and knowledge could contribute to the work life at the institution.

This was in line with Maslow's theory where lecturers needed to exchange ideas with people from outside in order to grow in their skills. This knowledge when applied fervently could have benefitted the institution.

Hamrita (2011) stated that other universities or institutions could have used the experience and expertise of academic staff from UNZA to help solve problems of the region or country. The organisation needed to improve on interlinks with universities in other countries that could in turn share materials with UNZA lecturers on sabbatical leave. Such exchange programmes help lecturers gain more experience which can be useful to UNZA. The participants suggested that staff exchange programmes could have helped management to improve on the running of the university through the new academic staff who could have brought new ideas to develop the institution.

#### *g) Employing of part-time lecturers*

The participants were asked about the possible way management could have used to improve retention of lecturers. Employing of part-time lecturers was suggested as one way of mitigating staff shortages. The views of the lecturers and administrators on the aspect of contracting part-time lecturers were different. The respondents were for the view that part-time and expatriate lecturers had limited time to attend to all the needs of the students. Contrary to this, administrators felt that recruiting part-time lecturers was in order to address the issues of shortages of lecturers at the university (Xu, 2018).

The only way forward for UNZA was to ensure that the institution employed more staff who could be retained by motivating them to put in their best and contribute positively to the well-being of the institution. This view was supported by Netswera *et al.*, (2005); Yang *et al.*, (2010) who argued that meeting the expectations of employees and staying up-to-date with the job prospects for new and existing employees, to the level which other organisations meet these expectations, was demanded for employee retention. Implementing all these

views, could see massive retention of its staff as there could be a motivated workforce because of such strategies.

The study noted that despite these strategies UNZA management had put in place in order to mitigate the migration of lecturers, which resulted in high turnover every year, the institution kept on losing its academic staff. The only lasting solution to the challenges of retention at UNZA was to ensure that the university recruited more lecturers and retained them. This could go a long way in mitigating and alleviating shortages of academic staff at UNZA. Retention of lecturers was critical to UNZA if it was to maintain its academic profile both locally and internationally. The academic staff is a critical component in helping the institution achieve its objectives of producing highly skilled and learned human resource which the country needed most. This view is supported by Esemé (2010); Mamoon (2013) who observed that hiring the right people from the start could also reduce turnover.

Therefore, the lecturer and management participants suggested that employing of part-time lecturers could have helped to solve the problem of turnover and reduce the excess load that lecturers who had remained had to take up.

#### *h) Improving university infrastructure*

Another possible way to retain lecturers is to improve the state of the infrastructure, such as providing adequate office space, laboratories and lecture theatre as well as housing for members of staff. Satisfying the lecturers could encourage them to stay longer in the institution. UNZA was building more hostels for students, office accommodation for academic staff as well as lecture theatres but these were being overtaken by the ever-growing population of the institution. Kamwanga (2013) stated that the institution suffered staffing constraints and support systems as well as infrastructure limitations like those of the wider University of Zambia.

When an employee is content with his or her working conditions, he or she is more likely to stay with the organisation (Masaiti and Naluyele, 2011). Good infrastructure motivates lecturers. The academics needed to teach in less crowded lecture theatres or laboratories and they needed office space and houses for their families. This is in line with the physiological needs of Maslow. Shelter is important for every human being. Managers should provide an enabling environment for lecturers to work in. A university with adequate infrastructure would encourage lecturers to teach with zeal.

#### *i) Use of modern teaching and learning material and improved library facilities*

All the lecturer and administrator respondents agreed that modern teaching and learning resources would play a significant role in retaining lecturers.

In most circumstances, lecturers used their own laptops for teaching. When they leave abruptly, the institution loses the

teaching material. However, lecturers at times didn't have learning or teaching material that is the reason they use personal teaching material. It was suggested that making strides in ensuring that modern technology is incorporated in teaching and learning such as the use of ICT through video conferencing, Skype and PowerPoint presentation for lectures and e-learning and other modern technologies could improve the teaching of big groups than depending entirely on the traditional type of teaching. All these strategies if well employed would play a big role in ensuring that lecturers become motivated and contribute positively to the growth of UNZA.

The University Library stokes mostly old books while students needed new books. The only other option for students was to access study material through the internet but a number of students did not know how to use computers by then and therefore, the internet which often leads to cheating as they have to ask their friends to research for them. Some students who were computer literate waited in queues at the library in order to access the computer laboratory to do their research using the few university computers because it was costly to use computers at the internet cafes outside the university.

The views given by the administrator respondents were significant in achieving the aspirations of any institution of higher learning. Big lecturer theatres to accommodate a larger number of students were needed for the institution. Teaching and learning resources such as well-furnished library, study rooms and general environment of the campus need to be conducive not only for teaching and learning but also for carrying out research (Collins and Clark, 2003; Brink *et al.*, 2013). It is important to retain top talent in order to produce attractive results in the institution.

This was in line with the theoretical framework where lecturers needed learning and teaching material in order to achieve their goals. All respondents supported the notion that teaching and learning resources need to be improved in their university in order to reduce on stress. When lecturers came from their studies, they found it difficult to adjust to the challenges of learning and teaching resources that UNZA was facing. Those who had gone to developed countries bemoaned the situation in Zambia when they compared how easy it was to go to class in the countries they were retaining from and this often frustrated them. This is the reason why participants of the study thought that if learning and teaching resources were made available, it could contribute to staff retention.

## VII. CONCLUSION

There were strategies which were suggested from this study in order to have a steady workforce. Firstly, salaries needed to be attractive and paid promptly. Pension benefits and gratuities needed to be settled to those lecturers that had not been honoured.

The other strategy was that the infrastructure needed to be improved so that lecturers could have offices and students

could have spacious lecturer theatres as well as hostels. It was suggested that the administration needed to employ more part-time lecturers to reduce the work load of the permanent lecturers. The other approach was on promotion procedures by UNZA administration. Lecturers should be promoted basing on the size of their classes. Those who handled big groups were to be recognised and promoted for the pressure they went through by teaching such crowds and not necessarily qualifications.

### VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) Improved conditions of service would immensely contribute to retention of lecturers for better performance. Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) suggested that increment of salaries relative to those paid to other professionals in equivalent occupations and the provision of incentives such as retirement benefits and pension plans, and suitable accommodation would greatly motivate lecturers. Fringe benefits should be paid on time.
- ii) There is need for the university to consider providing research grants to academic staff. Research is the backbone of every university. The university could set aside a fraction of the funds that it generates through user fees for research which all academic staff can access. Sierra et al. (2017) indicated that research generates knowledge and raises the profile of the institution would be no new knowledge in the university.
- iii) Promotion of lecturers should not be subjective, rather, a more objective point scoring system should be used so that every lecturer is motivated (Ali Iqbal, 2020). This is due to the fact that lecturers were promoted based on qualifications and what the promotion committee recommended. Promotion criteria ought to include the size of class the lecturers handled.

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