



Full Length Research Article

PERCEPTIONS ON REMUNERATIONS AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: One of the biggest challenges many Public Universities worldwide and more so in developing economies will continue to face is the accelerated academic staff turnover intention due to pay inadequacy. The increasing level of academic staff attrition in Public Universities worries the quality of higher education if corrective measures are not employed.

Objective: This research set out to investigate the academic staff perception regarding remuneration and turnover intention in Public Universities.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey design was used and the study adopted a quantitative approach. A sample of 134 (105 males and 29 females) full time academic staff were randomly drawn from Gulu University.

Results: The study established that academic staff perception regarding remuneration at Gulu University was low. Further, the key challenges facing academic staff regarding remuneration at Gulu University were delays in payment of basic salary and allowances as well as the unmatched salary scale and allowances with academic qualifications and experiences.

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INTRODUCTION

Employees' world over regards remuneration as an important ingredient in ensuring their commitment to organisation. The increasing level of academic staff attrition in public universities worries the quality of higher education if corrective measures are not employed (Bassett, 2005, Businge and Kamugaba 2010, Guma, 2011). Remuneration is defined as a reward given to labour or service compensation that an employee receives in return for his or her contribution to the organization. Remuneration therefore occupies an important place in the life of an employee. According to Daly and Dee (2006), the concept of remuneration refers to "all forms of financial returns, tangible services and benefits employees receive as part of an employment relationship." In other words remuneration is the monetary benefit that one receives as part of an employment agreement. Herzberg (1959) in an attempt to probe what motivates employees in the work place posits that remuneration factors are essential to prevent

dissatisfaction and must be adequate to prevent turnover intentions. One of the biggest challenges many Public Universities worldwide will continue to face is the accelerated academic staff turnover intention due to pay inadequacy (Amutuhair, 2010). According to a report commissioned by the universities of New Zealand in 2012, aimed at comparing remuneration of academic staff in New Zealand Public Universities with those in Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and the United States of America, between the years 2011 and 2012, academic staff in all universities in these countries expressed negative perception towards their remuneration which they noted was inadequate to meet their needs, a number of them had also considered changing career for better remuneration (Guma, 2011). Across all universities in Africa, academic staff members consider their remunerations as inadequate and not relative to the cost of living for instance, at the University of Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2006, 50% of the academic staff left the university service for other careers due to dissatisfaction with their remuneration (Mihyo, 2007). At the University of Ghana and Ibadan, about 76% of academic staff members expressed negative perception towards their remuneration that indicated dissatisfaction with their basic salary and allowances, noting its inadequacy; they

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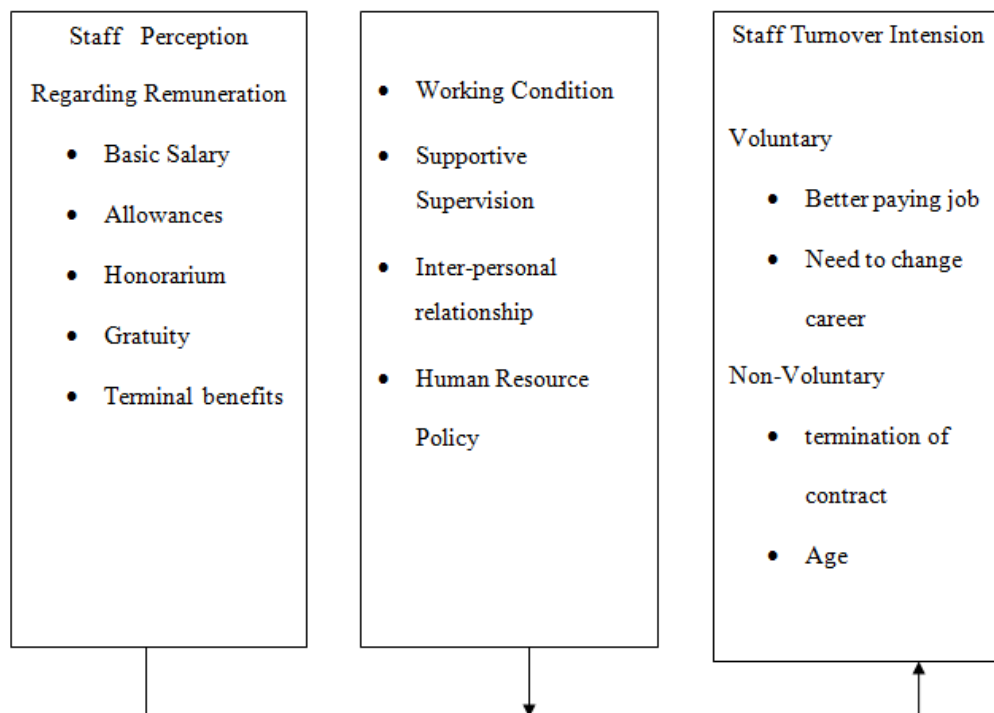
then make decision to quit university service for career with well-paying jobs elsewhere remuneration (Tettey, 2006). In Ugandan public universities, academic staff attrition rate is alarming. Public universities date back to the pre-colonial era when Makerere University was established in 1922 as a technical college to train public servants for civil service, teaching and parastatals. In 1937, the college became an institution for higher education as a constituent college of the University of London. Other public universities like Kyambogo, Mbarara, Busitema, and Gulu emerged later (Mihyo, 2007). Ugandan Public universities has over the recent years' experience accelerated academic staff turnover with unclear causes. According to Kamugaba (2010), the increasing trend of academic staff quitting the university service in one academic year for well-paying jobs in other organisations. For example At Makerere University between 2009 and 2013 over twenty six top performing academic staff left the university while Mbarara University lost twenty one academic staff between 2011 to 2013 (Tettey, 2006).

Gulu University, particularly in 2004, over twelve academic staff left; in 2010 nine academic staff left consequently in 2011 fifteen academic staff left and in 2012/2013 about ten academic staff made decision to quit service (Human Resource Gulu University, 2010). Gulu University was established in October, 2001 by the Government of Uganda, following its statutory establishment as a corporate entity under section 22 (1), 23 (1), 24 (1) and 25 of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institution Act No.7 of 2001. The increasing number of top performing academic staff at Gulu University quitting the university service for better paying jobs elsewhere may cripple the university from its core functions of transforming the community through learning and teaching, research and innovation and production of quality man power

for development when unchecked (Tettey, 2009 and Chipunza, 2009). Gulu University, particularly in 2004, over twelve academic staff left; in 2010 nine academic staff left consequently in 2011 fifteen academic staff left and in 2012/2013 about ten academic staff made decision to quit service (Human Resource Gulu University, 2010). Gulu University has a total of 406 established academic staff positions. However, only 203 positions are occupied. Out of the 203 present total, higher ranking positions remains unstaffed yet they are considered top performers (Human Resource Gulu University, 2010). There is therefore need to ensure adequate remuneration and possibly enhance academic staff retention.

Conceptual Framework on Academic Staff Perception and Turnover Intension

In the conceptual framework, two variables were established in the study; the independent variable academic staff remuneration perception regarding remuneration and the dependent variable academic staff turnover intention at Gulu University. Figure 1 above shows how academic staff remuneration in terms of adequacy of basic salary extra workload allowance, and responsibility allowance, marking allowance, honorarium, gratuity and terminal benefits could influence voluntary turnover intention triggered by availability of well-paying jobs elsewhere, change in career and non-voluntary turnover intention triggered by peer influence and termination of contract at Gulu University. However, the intervening variables; work conditions, supportive supervision, interpersonal relationship and the perception of academic staff regarding the university policies may weakened or strengthen this relationship.



Source: Modified from Herzberg (1959)

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework on Academic Staff Perception and Turnover Intension

MATERIALS AND METHODS

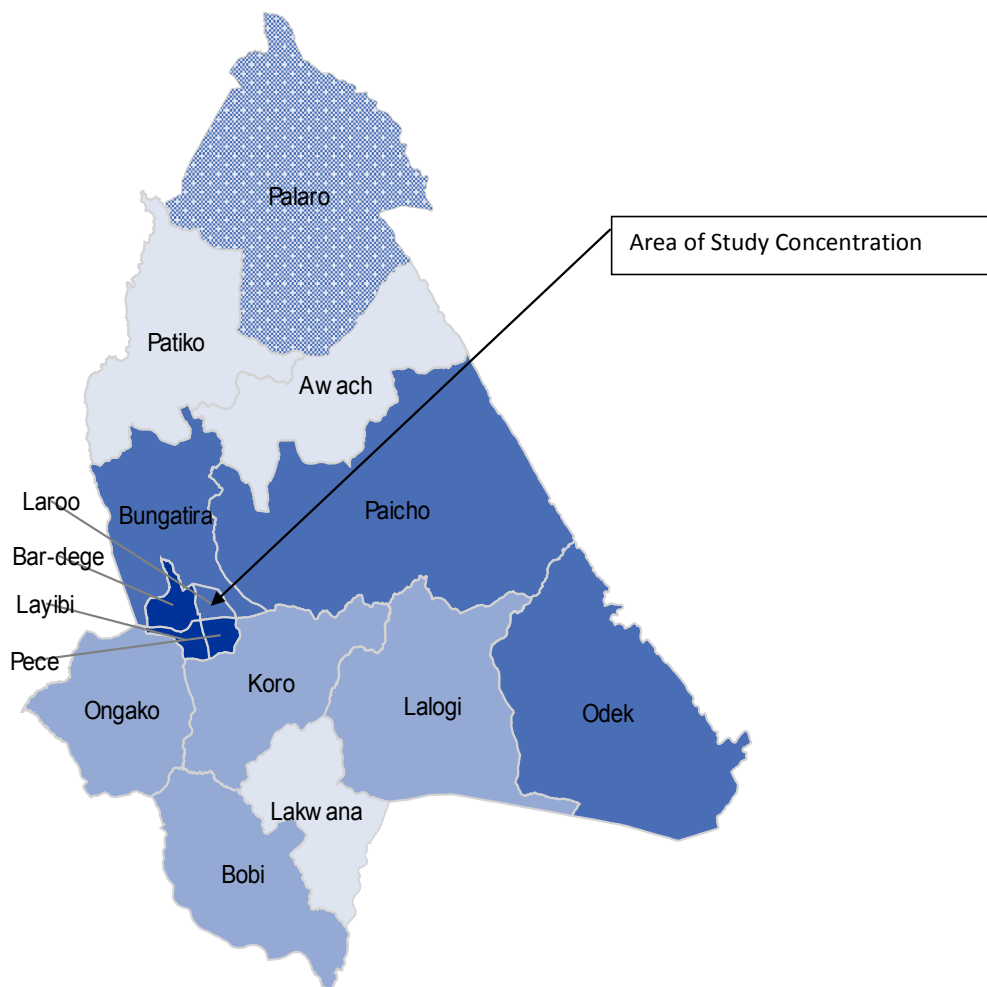
Scope of the Study

This study was conducted at Gulu University which is located in Laroo Division, Gulu municipality as shown in Figure 2. Gulu District is bordered by Oyam from the South, Nwoya from the West, Pader from the East and Lamwo from the North and it is at a road distance of 332 Km from Kampala the capital city of Uganda according to [Gulu District Local Government Plan \(2011\)](#). The content consisted of a case study on the investigation of the relationship between academic staff remuneration and turnover intentions in Gulu University. The targeted participants were full time academic staff of Gulu University. The study considered period from academic year 2002/2003 to 2010/2011. Data was collected between the period of February 2014 and March 2014.

enabling the researcher to look at the variables from a variety of perspectives ([Oso and Onen, 2008](#)).

Study Population, Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The target population comprised all the 203 full time academic staff of Gulu University comprising Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lectures, Lectures and Teaching Assistants from the different Faculties and Institutes such as Agriculture and Environment, Medicine, Science, Business and Development Studies, Education and Humanities, Peace and Strategic Studies, Research and Graduate Studies in Gulu University as in Table 1 according to Gulu University [Human Resource Gulu University \(2010\)](#). See appendix C for further details. This study employed stratified random sampling to select respondents for equitable representation in the sample for the different subgroups.



Source: *Gulu District Local Government Development Plan (2011)*

Figure 2. Map of Gulu District Showing the Location of Gulu University

Research Design

The study used a cross-sectional survey design. Both qualitative and quantitative paradigms were used. Quantitative research approach was used in this study as the staff intentions were measured as categorical data on a Likert scale 1-5, qualitative approach enabled the study to obtain complementary opinions and views from respondents and thus

These strata include Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lectures, Lectures, and Teaching Assistants. Simple random sampling was used within each stratum to select the samples to avoid bias and ensures equal representation of the sub-groups in the sample. The study sample consisted of 134 academic staff of Gulu University. The 134 respondents were distributed as 3 Professors, 3 Associate Professors, 3 Senior Lecturers, 72 Lecturers, and 53 Teaching Assistants. Random sampling was

carried out for allowing sample selection using sub-groups in the sample proportion to the total population. The sample size before was determined using the formulae below; $n =$

$\left(\frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}\right)$ where: n is Sample Size, N is Target Population; e is Statistical error (constant) according to Amin (2005).

$$n = \left(\frac{203}{1+203(0.05)^2}\right) \quad n = \left(\frac{203}{1.5075}\right) \quad n = 134$$

In order to get the sample size for each category (strata), the researcher calculated the sample size by dividing the total population of each stratum by target population and multiplied it by the total sample size so as to get the proportional allocation of sample as shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1. Sample Size

Category	Stratum Size	Stratum Proportion (N)	Percentage (%)
Academic Staff			
Professors	3	3	2
Associate Professors	4	3	2
Senior Lectures	7	3	2
Lecturers	113	72	54
Teaching Assistants	76	53	40
Total	203	134	100

Source: Gulu University Staff Establishment Report, (2010)

Data Collection Techniques and Data Collection Instruments

The study used two data collection method for collecting data to answer the research question. Closed ended questionnaire was used for the data collection purpose. The advantage of closed ended questions was that it save time of respondent and the management of data was much simpler (Oso and Onen, 2008). The general advantage of questionnaire method over other data collection methods is that information can be collected from larger sample (Amin, 2005). Document analysis was also used to collect information in this study. The advantage of document analysis was that it enables collection of information from a larger sample of respondents easily (Oso and Onen 2008). The general advantage of document analysis over other data collection methods is that vital information can be collected from a larger sample at an instant (Amin, 2005). This study used self-administered closed ended questionnaires to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire comprised sections and sub-sections. Section one sought the respondents background information that included gender, age, marital status, highest educational qualification, rank, faculty/ institute under which they serve and year of work spent at Gulu University.

Section two had sub-sections A, B and C, sub-section A was focused on objective (i) and sought respondent's perceptions regarding remuneration adequacy at Gulu University. Items under sub-section A comprised basic salary, extra workload allowances, responsibility allowances, marking allowances, honorarium, and gratuity and terminal benefits. This sought to establish the status of academic staff perception regarding remuneration at Gulu University. Sub-section B focused on objective (ii) and it sought respondent's turnover intention at Gulu University.

Items under this sub-section were constructed on voluntary and non-voluntary academic staff turnover. Sub-section C focused on objective (iii) and it sought to identify the challenges facing academic staff regarding remuneration at Gulu University. Sub-section A, B and C were measured using five point Likert scale coded as follows; Strongly Disagree (SD=1), Disagree (D=2), Not Sure (NS=3), Agree (A=4) and Strongly Agree (SA=5). Five point Likert scale was preferred because it enables numerical values to be given opinions, enables questions to be turned in to statements for respondents to indicate levels of agreement and disagreement and allows different statements to be provided in a list for the respondents to complete categorically (Amin, 2005).

Quality Control

Validity

The objectives of the study together with the copies of questionnaires were given to two experts from Gulu University and the supervisor to find out whether the research instrument measured what it was intended to measure (Oso and Onen, 2008). Content Validity Index (CVI) was used to establish to be 0.890. The CVI was calculated by considering the number of items declared relevant by the two experts divided by the total number of items in the questionnaire was above 0.7, thus, the CVI was accepted as valid since it was found to be above 0.7 according to Amin, (2005). See appendix B for further details.

Reliability

The study used Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to assess the internal consistency of the research instrument. Results for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha confirmed that majority of the measures constructs in the study exhibited good reliability. Table 3 show the internal consistency of the instruments with the overall reliability coefficient at 0.811, above the 0.7 value according to Amin, (2005). Table 2 below shows the reliability coefficient results. The overall reliability coefficient stood at 0.811, above the 0.7 value which is considered acceptable according to Amin, (2005). See appendix D for further details.

Table 2. Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Result

Questionnaire Section	Variable	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Values
B	Academic Staff Remuneration	0.829
C	Working condition	0.834
D	Turnover intentions	0.771
	Overall Value	0.811

Source: Primary Data, 2014

Data Analysis and Statistical Procedure

The data collected were analyzed using Statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) version 16.0, research objective one that sought to establish academic staff perception regarding remuneration at Gulu University was analyzed using Mean and ANOVA. Objective two that sought to establish turnover intention at Gulu University was analyzed using Mean. Objective three was analyzed using Pearson Correlation to establish the relationship between the different academic staff remuneration packages with turnover intention at Gulu University and Regression analysis was done to predict the significance of the correlations between the different remuneration packages with turnover at Gulu University. Objective four descriptively analyzed to determine the key challenges facing academic staff regarding remuneration at Gulu University.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 3 shows that majority of respondents were males (78.4%), most of the respondents were in the age bracket of 30-39 years (77.6%), and majority of respondents were married (81.3%).

Table 3 also reveals that majority of respondents were masters holder's (53%), 46.3% (majority) were at lecturer level, faculty of science produced majority of respondents (38.1%). Most respondents (46.3%) had spent 5-9 years serving at Gulu University, while majority of respondents were on permanent terms of employment (82.1%). The implication of the background information to this study is that, academic staff remuneration could be dissatisfied with the remuneration adequacy increasing their turnover intention at Gulu University since majority respondents were mature, married and substantially educated with expectation of adequate remuneration.

Status of academic staff remuneration

Respondents were asked to give their perception on the status of remuneration at Gulu University, Table 4 and 5 below provide the details of the findings.

According to the above analysis, the overall academic staff perception regarding remuneration at Gulu University was found to be low as most respondents disagreed on the adequacy of the remuneration packages with a Mean values about 2. The implication of this study finding is that, the remuneration provided to academic staff at Gulu University is not adequate.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Response	Frequency (n=134)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	105	78.4
	Female	29	21.6
	Total	134	100.0
Age bracket	20-29 years	12	9.0
	30-39 years	104	77.6
	40-49 years	6	4.5
	50-59 years	5	3.7
	70 years and above	7	5.2
Marital status	Single	17	12.7
	Married	109	81.3
	Widowed/Widower	3	2.2
	Not applicable	5	3.7
Highest education qualification	Degree	32	23.9
	PGD	8	6.0
	Masters	71	53.0
	PhD	12	9.0
	Post PhD	2	1.5
	Others (specify)	2	1.5
Rank/Position in the University	Teaching Assistant	50	37.3
	Lecturer	62	46.3
	Senior Lecturer	11	8.2
	Professor	11	8.2
Faculty/Institute where you serve	Education & Humanities	32	23.9
	Business & Development	20	14.9
	Medicine'	6	4.5
	Agriculture	23	17.2
	Science	51	38.1
	Others (Specify)	2	1.5
Tenure	Less than 1 years	6	4.5
	1-4 years	42	31.3
	5-9 years	62	46.3
	10 years and above	24	17.9
Terms of employment	Temporary	6	4.5
	Contract	15	11.2
	Permanent	110	82.1

Source: Primary Data 2014

Table 4. Responses on the Status of Academic Staff Remuneration at Gulu University

Remuneration Packages	Mean	Mode	Maximum	Minimum	Standard Deviation
Basic salary	2.14	2.00	4.00	1.00	.78
Extra workload Allowance	2.05	2.00	3.50	1.00	.70
Responsibility Allowance	2.13	2.00	3.60	1.00	.73
Marking Allowance	2.01	2.00	3.40	1.00	.67
Honorarium	2.24	3.00	4.00	1.00	.81
Gratuity	2.42	3.00	4.00	1.00	.80
Terminal benefit	2.36	3.00	3.50	1.00	.78

Source: Primary Data, 2014

Table 5. ANOVA Results on the Status of Academic Staff Remuneration

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Basic salary	Between Groups	4.468	3	1.489	2.671	.060
	Within Groups	22.858	41	.558		
	Total	27.326	44			
Extra workload Allowance	Between Groups	1.546	3	.515	1.152	.341
	Within Groups	17.003	38	.447		
	Total	18.549	41			
Responsibility Allowance	Between Groups	2.023	3	.674	1.349	.272
	Within Groups	20.496	41	.500		
	Total	22.519	44			
Marking Allowance	Between Groups	.917	3	.306	.719	.547
	Within Groups	16.590	39	.425		
	Total	17.507	42			
Honorarium	Between Groups	1.009	3	.336	.491	.690
	Within Groups	26.016	38	.685		
	Total	27.025	41			
Gratuity	Between Groups	.283	3	.094	.139	.936
	Within Groups	26.557	39	.681		
	Total	26.840	42			
Terminal Benefits	Between Groups	.875	3	.292	.462	.711
	Within Groups	24.642	39	.632		
	Total	25.517	42			

Source: Primary Data, 2014

Table 6. Responses on the Level of Academic Staff Turnover Intention at Gulu University

Academic Staff turnover intention	Total (n)	Disagreement (%)	Total Not Sure (n)	Not Sure (%)	Total Agreement (n)	Agreement (%)
Have positive morale to serve	40	(29.9)	35	(26.1)	59	(44)
Still serving with others	43	(32.1)	21	(15.7)	70	(52.2)
Enjoy & intend to continue	28	(20.9)	27	(20.1)	79	(58.9)
Looking for a new job	23	(17.2)	16	(11.9)	95	(70.9)
Intend to due to delays and inadequacies	32	(23.9)	41	(30.6)	61	(45.3)
Average		(24.8)		(20.9)		(44.7)

Source: Primary Data, 2014

Table 7. Mean Value on the Level of Academic Staff Turnover at Gulu University

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mode	Minimum	Maximum
Staff Turnover Intention	3.32	.60	3.00	2	5

Table 8. Responses on Challenges facing Academic Staff Regarding Remuneration

Key Challenges facing Academic Staff Regarding Remuneration	Frequency	Percentage
Delayed payment of basic salary and Allowances	70	(52.238)
Salary scale does not match with qualification and experience	22	(16.41)
Unpaid salary arrears and allowances	17	(12.68)
Inadequate allowances	11	(8.20)
Unpaid gratuity	10	(7.462)
Unpaid terminal	04	(2.98)

Source: Primary Data, 2014

Table 5 above shows that the different categories of academic staff have various perceptions regarding their basic salary that is slightly significant at $p = 0.060$. Academic staff in high ranking position like professors feel their basic salary is inadequate while those in lower ranking position like Teaching Assistants feel provided with adequate basic salary since their salary scale is closer to that of the lecturers. The analysis further shows that all the different academic staff levels similar views on their different forms of allowances as low and inadequate at $p > 0.05$. The implication of the study is that the basic salary and allowances offered to academic staff at Gulu University are inadequate.

Level of academic staff turnover intention

Table 6 above shows that there is moderate academic staff turnover intention at Gulu University with an average 4.7% of the agreed total which is moderately significant. Therefore, whereas a moderate percentage of academic staff wishes to leave serving, a moderate percentage would wish to continue serving at the Gulu University. Table 7 above revealed that academic staff turnover intention at Gulu University is moderate with the overall Mean value of 3.30. The study finding imply that academic staff turnover at Gulu University is not based on remuneration.

Challenges facing academic staff regarding remuneration

Table 8 shows that there are key challenges facing academic staff regarding remuneration at Gulu University. The prominent ones with high ranging frequency are; delayed payment of basic salary and allowances at 52.238%, salary scale does not match with academic qualifications and experiences at 16.41% and unpaid salary arrears and allowances at 12.68%. The implication of this study finding is that key challenges face academic staff regarding remuneration at Gulu University.

DISCUSSION

The overall academic staff perception regarding remuneration at Gulu University was found to be low as most respondents disagreed on the adequacy of the remuneration packages. As expected, many academic staff works with a major aim in mind of getting adequate remuneration packages and along the way they expect increment in their basic pay and allowances. **Price (2001)** posits that positive employee's perception towards their salaries as adequate enhances their commitment and satisfaction in an organisation. **Michael (2008)** noted that adequate remuneration to academic staff in universities act as a precursor for their turnover intentions. The level of academic staff turnover intention in Gulu University is building up though still moderate. The position agreed with **Businge and Kamugaba (2010)** who noted that universities worldwide and particularly public universities are experiencing moderate turnover which needs to be checked at an earlier stage to ensure staff retention. The findings here is in further support of prior researchers like **Amutuhaire (2010)** in which he found out that a moderate academic staff turnover intentions in universities do exist. This indicates that academic staff equates their remuneration with their service and qualification at the universities.

On challenges facing academic staff regarding remuneration, the finding here indicated that key challenges facing academic staff regarding remuneration at Gulu University are the delayed payment of basic salary and allowances, salary scale which does not match with academic qualifications and experiences and unpaid salary arrears and allowances owing to academic staff. This is in agreement with **Harting (2008)**, who noted that academic staff morale to perform at universities is challenged by delayed and unpaid salary arrears to academic staff. More so, earlier study by **Chew (2004)** and **Daly (2006)** indicated that academic staff in public universities at the beginning of the new millennium faces unprecedented challenges of unpaid salary arrears yet they are overwhelmed by the unstoppable demand for access for higher education which is recognized as a key force for **development**.

Harting (2008) and **Mwadiani (2002)** indicated that academic staff in African universities currently functions to perform under very difficult circumstances, the expertise base of universities has been eroded due to inadequacy in basic pay and delayed remittance of remuneration to the extent that not enough teaching capacity is available to provide quality training for new generations of citizens. However, this study finding disagrees with the work of other previous researchers like **Johnshrud and Rosser (2002)** who noted that the increasing number of students at universities and lack of lecture space has been the major challenges facing academic staff in public universities. **Brown (2003)** added that lack of space and equipment in laboratories affects the performance of lecturers. **Sutherland (2004)**, **Samuel and Chipunza (2009)** further revealed that inadequate facilities, Government insensitivity to lecturers needs, job insecurity, poor interactions with colleagues are some of the key challenges faced by academic staff in Public Universities.

Policy implications

The study recommends to the concerned ministries of the national economy to develop adequate academic staff remuneration policy frame work for public universities, and to address the factors causing turnover so as to enhance academic staff retention in public universities. Further, the study provides recommendation to university administrators to adequately remunerate academic staff by devising alternative means of raising funds for salary top ups to provide satisfaction of academic staff with their remuneration. The study also recommend for salary increment so as to match with academic staff qualification and experience.

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