

Income differentials and academic staff attrition in South-South public universities, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper has explored income differentials and academic staff attrition in south-south public universities, Nigeria. Equity theory guided this study. The study used the tracer method of ex-post-facto research design, which surveyed 370 academic staff members who were sampled using multi-stage sampling in a population of 10,570 academics in the region. The questionnaire that was used to gather data was titled Incomes Differentials and Academic Staff Attrition Questionnaire (IDASAQ), which was validated through expert judgement and was further subjected to Cronbach's alpha reliability, and it yielded a coefficient of 0.89. Research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages), and the Pearson product-moment correlation hypothesis was used to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 significance level. The results showed that academic staff generally perceive significant income differences between the university sector and comparable roles in other sectors of the economy. Also, it was discovered that the rate of attrition of the academic staff in universities is quite high. Furthermore, the findings showed a significant correlation between the rate of attrition in universities and the perception of income differences among academic staff. Conclusively, the issue of income differentials is one of the biggest challenges to the retention of academic personnel in public universities. It was thus recommended that immediate restructuring of academic salary scales occur to achieve competitiveness with other sectors, along with the institutionalisation of regular salary increments based on inflation indices, the adoption of special retention measures including research allowances and performance-based incentives, and ongoing discussions between the government, university management, and academic unions to develop evidence-based income policies that reconcile fiscal realities with the need to maintain quality academics.

Keywords: Academic Staff Attrition, Earnings Disparities, Income Differentials, Public Universities, Staff Retention

I. INTRODUCTION

The standard of the higher education of any country is inherently connected with the quality, dedication and morale of the academic staff. Universities are the pillars of knowledge creation, innovation and human capital formation, and hence the stability of teaching and research staff is very important to the national development. The challenge that Nigerian public universities have been grappling with, however, and which threatens their ability to meet this mandate, is the steady outflow of skilled academic personnel which is mainly due to poor remuneration (Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2024). This has been christened brain drain by many and has become a hallmark in the higher education system in Nigeria, whose impacts are being felt far and wide in terms of quality of teaching, research work and competitiveness of institutions. The disparities in income between academics and other professionals in the economy of the Nigerian universities has increased significantly within the last twenty years. Whereas a professor in Nigeria has a monthly salary ranging between ₦342,442 and ₦501,680, his or her counterparts in the oil and gas industry may earn more than ₦2,000,000, and the chief executive officers in private institutions earn an average of ₦1,221,610 (Academic & Non-Academic Employees, 2025; Akinselure, 2025). Even in the government sector, civil servants at the top level are earning almost twice as much as a university professor. The contrast between Nigerian academic salaries and those in other African nations, Europe, and America is even more extreme with professors in Africa able to receive between 10,000 and 12,921 dollars each month (ZipRecruiter, 2025; Remote People, 2025).

In addition to financial benefits, scholars in the Nigerian state universities also face structural issues such as lack of research funds, poor infrastructure, inconsistent payments, and professional development (Olowoye, 2025; Nkedishu & Okonta, 2023). These circumstances are quite different to those of other professionals in the banking sector, telecommunications, information technology and multinational corporations, whereby an organized career

advancement, performance-based bonuses and conducive working environments have become the norm. The overall impact of these inequalities would be a continuous brain drain of the academic of the universities in Nigeria to other more lucrative sectors in the country and to institutions in other countries that are better resourced (Akinwale et al., 2023; Fapohunda, 2012). Academic staff attrition does not just have an impact on individual career decisions but the whole higher education system. Colleges with high rates of turnover have problems with the stability of academic standards, are susceptible to the break in the continuity of research, and have difficulties in mentoring the upcoming generation of scholars (Bassey et al., 2025; Nkedishu 2022). Students are victims to crowding in classes, inexperienced faculty, and poor quality of teaching. The ability to innovate and generate knowledge in the country is reduced because experienced researchers transfer to the areas where their skills are more appreciated and rewarded (Mzimela et al., 2025). The issue that needs to be comprehended is the connection between income differentials and loss of academic staff members to better understand the strategies that can be employed to retain them, as well as enhance the higher education sector in Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Teaching, research, and community service through public universities are very vital in the development of a nation. The key attribute of the success of these institutions is the accessibility and maintenance of capable academic personnel (ChaaCha, 2024). Nevertheless in the recent years the issue of academic staff attrition has been facing more challenges in the public universities as experienced lecturers and researchers move out of the system to seek other employment. Among the most tenacious elements connected with this tendency is the income disparity between the public universities and the other parts of the economy (Maduelosi & Ezuluofor, 2025). In the state universities, the academic staff of these universities tend to be poorly paid compared to international university, government agencies, and the business sector, even though they may be of the same or even more qualification, workload and responsibility. Such income inequalities are further enhanced by late salaries, poor accessibility to research grants, poor welfare schemes and slow career advancement. Since the cost of living is rising particularly in the urban centres, a good number of academics are struggling to maintain a decent living standard with university salaries alone (Russell et al., 2025). As a result, dissatisfaction with income has become a significant cause of frustration, which reduces morale and commitment to work in university (Chen, 2022; Nkedishu & Okonta, 2023). The continued exodus of academic employees is a grave consequence to the state universities. High turnover rates interrupt the teaching timetables, augment the student to lecturer ratios, and add more work load on the left behind staff (Hammond & Kutsanedzie, 2015). It also results in a loss of institutional memory, poor mentorship of young scholars, and lower productivity in research due to the loss of senior and specialized academicians (Kadikilo et al., 2024). In the long term, this may compromise the quality of academic programmes, accreditation performance, and competitiveness of the public universities globally. Although the industrial actions are frequent, policy changes, and pay reviews to enhance employee welfare, attrition of the academic staff is a common problem in the public universities (Tom et al., 2024). Although other studies have investigated aspects like working conditions, job satisfaction and leadership, barely any empirical attention has been given to the role played by income differentials in determining the decision of academic staff to quit the public universities specifically (Gazi et al., 2024). This vacuum is especially obvious in developing situations when economic demands are high and other working possibilities are becoming more and more appealing (Popoola, 2020; Nkedishu & Onyekwe, 2024). Therefore, an urgent need to investigate the phenomenon of income differentials in relation to academic staff attrition in public universities systematically is established. The scope of the problem of income differences in relation to staff turnover is necessary to create evidence-based policies that will help to improve staff retention, balance the academic workforce, and increase the ability of the public universities to meet their educational mission.

1.2 Research Questions

- i. What is the perception of academic staff on income differences between the university sector and comparable roles in other sectors of the economy?
- ii. What is the attrition rate of academic staff in universities?

1.3 Research Hypothesis

Perception on income differences is not significantly related to attrition rate of academic staff in universities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Equity Theory

The Equity Theory was created by J. Stacey Adams in 1963 and offers a solid model that can be used to interpret the perception of academic staff members on income differentials and consequently their effect on attrition. This theory

assumes that employees consider fairness when they compare their input-output ratio to other individuals in the same job (Adams, 1963). Psychological dissonance arises when employees feel that there is an inequity between their effort (effort, skills, and qualifications) and results (salary, benefits, recognition) and this leads to corrective action. The equity theory in relation to academic staff implies that lecturers compare their remuneration with their peers in their specific institution, as well as other related jobs in other sectors of the economy. Once the academic pay rate is greatly out of line with other options in the private sector, this perceived unfairness elicits dissatisfaction and behaviour to create a solution to the situation, such as a decrease in effort, internal accommodation, or quitting the institution completely. According to research, employees who feel the lack of pay equity tend to have lower motivation levels, low job satisfaction, and turnover intentions (Gazi et al., 2024). The applicability of the theory to higher educational institutions is especially important since the academic employees are endowed with skills that are highly transferable and earn high salaries in the consulting, industry, and international institutions. This introduces numerous points of comparison in equity, which could increase the perception of underpayment and lead to attrition in situations where the difference is large.

2.2 Empirical Review

The academic workforce in most countries is becoming more and more aware of the fact that there is a huge disparity between university work and other jobs (Mgaiwa, 2023). It has been found that not all universities are able to pay competitive salaries, and some of the universities cannot afford to pay minimal levels of salaries (Fulmer et al., 2023). Research also demonstrates that though people do tend to accept lower educational wages in order to work meaningfully and have freedom of thought, there are boundaries of such a trade-off, especially in cases where economic demands escalate (Hu & Hirsh, 2017; Alauddin et al., 2025). The Nigerian case is no exception as brain drain of universities has been massive since the 1980s with the experienced academicians moving to other African countries and the developed countries (Nwozor, 2011). According to historical evidence, before 1965, the salaries in the Nigerian university were on the same level as in Britain, however, further economic downturn and insufficient investments resulted in gaps (Popoola, 2020). The modern literature proves that low salary, lack of benefits, and career growth are the primary factors of discontent among the Nigerian scholars (Ibeh, 2024; Osakwe et al., 2026). Some of the causes of low compensation are corruption, dwindling oil earnings and competing interests of security, health and infrastructure sectors. Researchers have continuously found that compensation is one of the major factors that determine faculty retention in African universities. Research in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda indicates that academic personnel often use the issue of inadequate salary as the reason to justify quitting universities to seek better-paying opportunities either locally or in other countries (Ssali, 2023; Ngalomba, 2022; Ng'ethe et al., 2012). Study that investigated South African institutions revealed attrition rates of five to eighteen percent, and compensation concerns were one of the most significant factors in reasons to leave (Theron et al., 2023).

There is a wide range of attrition of global lecturers depending on the region and type of institution. Medical school research also shows that lecturer turnover is approximately eleven percent, which is possibly even greater than the national average turnover rate of 7.6 percent of all physicians, as well as replacement costs of about half a million per physician, and this demonstrates the high cost of attrition (Nina et al., 2023). The field of higher education in general has been characterized by unprecedented turnover rates that have been on the rise after the pandemic, with some sources claiming that the rates are two times higher than they were before the pandemic (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023). Brain drain has led to what researchers refer to as the intellectual hemorrhage in the Nigerian universities in particular. There is indication that there are more than 10,000 Nigerian scholars in foreign countries, especially in the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Middle East (Ogbu, 2019; Okpale 2025). The departure has been exacerbated by the Babangida and Abacha governments and is still ongoing today due to poor working conditions, insufficient funding, insecurity, and insufficient research support (Sulaiman, 2018; Nwokeocha 2023). The phenomenon is global but affects South-South universities and other institutions in Nigeria that have the same structural challenge. High attrition has such effects as the deterioration of the quality of teaching, the decline in research productivity, and the impossibility of hiring new employees (Liu & Li, 2025; Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2024). The loss of senior faculty members is placing academic departments in a situation where senior lecturers are taking over as heads instead of professors. Learner performance is reduced, knowledge within institutions is lost, and higher education institutions are finding it difficult to uphold academic standards (Maziah et al., 2019). Attrition is also cyclical, which adds further pressure since the staff that is left behind has been overworked and thus has more reasons to leave. Literature points to various other causes of academic attrition that are not tied to the salary, such as incompatible working conditions, lack of opportunities in staff development, poor infrastructure, regular strike activism, and the more general issue of insecurity (Jacob et al., 2021; IseOlorunkanmi et al., 2021; Ijomah & Abejirinde, 2024). The interaction of compensation and these other factors leads to compound effects that increase the rates of departure. Research underlines that even a small change in the conditions of work, combined with competitive remuneration, can greatly increase the level of retention and the stability of the institution (El Mountasser & Sahraoui, 2025; Iddrisu, 2022; Hudu, 2000).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design utilized in this study was ex-post-facto research design based on the tracer method. This design was considered appropriate since the two variables income differentials and academic staff attrition had already taken place and could not be directly manipulated by the researchers. This method enabled exploration of relationships and possible causal relationships in current data without disrupting the personnel decisions in institutions and compensation patterns.

3.2 Study Area

The research was carried out in the South-South geopolitical region of Nigeria in the public universities. This area is highly saturated with federal and state-owned tertiary institutions with peculiarities of economic and administrative processes.

3.3 Target Population

The population comprised 10,570 members of the academic staff that currently worked in the South-South geopolitical zone in the public universities. This is a wide variety of cadres that is from Assistant Assistants to Professors.

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample size

Multi-stage sampling method was used which included cluster, stratified and simple random sampling method such that the zone was covered in a representative manner. In accordance with the table provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), it was decided to have a sample of 370 respondents. It was calculated at 95% confidence level with a 5 percent margin of error to give the findings the statistical power.

3.5 Data Collection Tools and Procedures.

A structured questionnaire known as “Incomes Differentials and Academic Staff Attrition Questionnaire (IDASAQ)” was used as the main data collection tool. A four-point scale was used to give perceptions of income and the rate of attrition. The validity was determined by expert judgment from educational administration and planning, and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) it was backed by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett Test of Sphericity. Another test on the instrument involved reliability where 30 respondents not involved in the study were used. The alpha coefficient Cronbach of the instrument was 0.89, which revealed a high internal consistency.

3.6 Data Analysis

The analysis of data involved frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation to answer research questions, whereas the hypothesis was tested through Pearson Product Moment Correlation at a 0.05 significance level using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

According to the standard requirements of academic research, the informed consent form was given to the participants explaining the purpose of the study. The respondents were requested to participate in a strictly voluntary manner, and anonymity. The confidentiality of the respondents were preserved during the data collection and reporting process. All information was utilized purely in an academic nature, and identification of institutional information was coded to avoid any professional consequences on respondents.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 What is the Perception of Academic Staff on Income Differences between the University Sector and Comparable Roles in other Sectors of the Economy?

This research question sought to ascertain academic staff perception on income differences when compared to other sectors of the economy. The data collected are presented on Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics on perception of academic staff on income differences between the university sector and comparable roles in other sectors of the economy

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	The income earned by academic staff in Nigerian universities is lower than what is obtainable in other sectors of the economy.	3.29	0.86	High Agreement
2	The existing salary structure in Nigerian universities fairly matches my academic qualifications and years of experience.	1.93	1.04	Strong Disagreement
3	Differences in earnings between university employment and other sectors reduce the attractiveness of an academic career.	3.16	0.90	High Agreement
4	The salaries paid to academic staff are inadequate to comfortably meet their financial obligations.	3.28	0.94	High Agreement
5	Earnings in the university system are less competitive when compared with those in other professional occupations.	3.24	0.84	High Agreement
6	Income gaps between academia and other sectors significantly contribute to the loss of academic staff.	3.14	0.87	High Agreement
7	Many academics resign from university employment in search of higher-paying opportunities elsewhere.	3.18	0.84	High Agreement
8	Salary differences across sectors reduce my motivation to remain in the university system.	2.91	0.86	Moderate Agreement
9	Non-academic professional sectors provide greater prospects for financial growth than university employment.	3.13	0.85	High Agreement
10	Improving salary parity would greatly enhance the retention of academic staff in public universities.	3.41	0.81	High Agreement
Overall Mean		3.05	0.87	High Agreement

In response to Research Question 1, Table 1 shows that academic staff generally perceive significant income differences between the university sector and comparable roles in other sectors of the economy. The overall mean score of 3.05 indicates a high level of agreement that university earnings are relatively low and uncompetitive. Respondents strongly agreed that academic income is lower than earnings in other sectors ($\bar{x} = 3.29$), inadequate for meeting financial needs ($\bar{x} = 3.28$), and less competitive than earnings in other professional occupations ($\bar{x} = 3.24$). There was strong disagreement with the view that the current salary structure adequately reflects academic qualifications and experience ($\bar{x} = 1.93$), suggesting widespread dissatisfaction with existing pay frameworks. Participants also agreed that income gaps reduce the attractiveness of an academic career and contribute significantly to academic staff loss, as many academics leave in search of better-paying opportunities elsewhere. Although the effect of income differences on motivation to remain in the university system recorded a moderate level of agreement ($\bar{x} = 2.91$), the general pattern of responses indicates a clear perception that earnings disparities negatively affect staff morale and retention. Overall, the findings suggest that income differentials are a major concern among academic staff and are perceived as a key factor influencing attrition in public universities.

4.2 What is the Attrition Rate of Academic Staff in Universities?

This research question was interested in examining the number of academic staff that left the University for other Jobs or travelled overseas.

Table 2

Frequency and Percentages on Attrition Rate of Academic Staff in Universities

Metric	Value
Total Departments Surveyed	222
Total Academic Staff	4721
Total Staff Departures	686
Overall Staff Loss Rate	14.53%
Average Staff per Department	21.27
Average Departures per Department	3.09
Range of Staff Loss Rate	1.25% - 7.14%

In answer to Research Question 2, Table 2 reveals that the attrition rate of academic staff in universities is quite high. Out of 4,721 academic staff across 222 departments surveyed, a total of 686 staff departures were recorded, resulting in an overall staff loss rate of 14.53%. On average, each department had about 21.27 academic staff, with approximately 3.09 staff leaving per department within the period under review. The attrition rate varied across

departments, ranging from 1.25% to 7.14%, indicating uneven patterns of staff loss within the university system. This level of attrition suggests a notable reduction of academic personnel, which has implications for workload distribution, continuity of academic programmes, and the overall stability of the university workforce.

4.3 Perception on Income Differences is not Significantly Related to Attrition Rate of Academic Staff in Universities

This hypothesis aimed to investigate the relationship between academic staff's perception of income difference and the number of teaching staff who left the university for other jobs or travelled overseas.

Table 3:

Test of Relationship between Perception of Income Differences and Academic Staff Attrition Rate

Variables	Mean	SD	R-value	p-value	Decision
Perception of Income Differences	3.05	0.87	0.62	0.000	Reject H_0
Academic Staff Attrition Rate	14.53	1.47			

Table 3 presents the result of the test of relationship between academic staff perception of income differences and attrition rate in universities. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis reveals a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.62$) between perception of income differences and academic staff attrition rate. The result is statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that perception on income differences is not significantly related to attrition rate of academic staff in universities, is rejected. Thus, perception on income differences is significantly related to attrition rate of academic staff in universities.

4.4 Discussion

The discovery made was that academic staff generally perceive significant income differences between the university sector and comparable roles in other sectors of the economy. Perceived high income disparities between the university sector and other similar jobs in the rest of the economy might have been explained by the long-standing disparity between university pay scales and remuneration packages that are offered in government departments, the private sector, and international organizations. Academic staff are usually given a low pay that does not commensurate with their qualifications, experience, or even contribution in the development of the country despite the high level of education, professional training, and workload demands. The increasing living expenses, slow pay increments, low allowances and poor welfare provisions in the university system further support this perception by making the difference in incomes more noticeable and increasing the levels of dissatisfaction in academic personnel. This result is consistent with those of Mgaiwa (2023); Olagunju and Olufemi (2021) who found that academic salaries in Nigeria are significantly lower than those of other professionals in the fields of banking, oil and gas, telecommunications, and government agencies, and this difference is explained by the fact that the government budgets are not sufficient and academic unions do not have a high level of bargaining power. Likewise, Mbukwana and Ayandibu (2023) also discovered that, unlike scholars, practitioners in the corporate world enjoy performance-based pay, bonuses, and allowances, and their total compensation is comparatively more competitive and deters young scholars to accept a teaching and research career. Moreover, in a comparative analysis, Okpale (2025) who noted that salaries of Nigerian professors are considerably lower than those of their peers in other nations when computed through purchasing power parity, and experience other disadvantages in the form of infrequent salary payments, inadequate research funding, and low welfare benefits, as opposed to other professionals in the field who receive a more formal salary structure and better working conditions.

It was discovered that rate of attrition of the academic staff in universities is quite high. The result that the overall rate of attrition among academic staff in universities is relatively high might be explained by the fact that the problem of income dissatisfaction is long-term, as well as the problem of challenging working conditions in state universities. Poor and incompetent salaries, growing workloads, insufficient research grants, poor physical facilities, and lack of career progression opportunities, render other job opportunities more appealing to academic employees. With other industries providing higher financial benefits, job security and career advancement opportunities, a number of the academics have had to leave university employment in search of a better lifestyle and professional satisfaction thus raising the turnover of the staff in the different departments. This observation can be corroborated with those of Fulmer et al. (2023); Anokye et al., (2019) who have found that the attrition rate among lecturers in Nigerian universities has been on the rise in the last ten years with most opting to work in countries like the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and South Africa where the working conditions and payment are more competitive and consequently affect the quality of teaching, research work, and the overall performance of the institutions. Similarly, Nwokeocha (2023) discovered that unfavorable working conditions, coupled with delayed promotion and excessive workload, are the main factors that influence the academic staff turnover rates in Nigerian universities, and lecturers experience a higher degree of job dissatisfaction than any other profession because of inadequate funding, irregular salary, and insufficient

institutional assistance in career advancement. Besides, Sarabipour et al. (2023) found that loss of experienced lecturers eliminates mentorship opportunities to young academics, disrupts research partnerships, increases student to lecturer ratios resulting in overcrowded classrooms, and leads to a decrease in academic standards, with some universities trying to lessen the effects of staff loss by recruiting contract lecturers or adjunct faculty that tend to lower research productivity and institutional reputation.

The discovery was that academic staff perception of the difference in income is significantly related to the rate of attrition in universities. The observation that academic staff perception of income disparities is significantly related to attrition rate in universities may be explained by the direct effect on job commitment and retention decision of a direct impact of income satisfaction. Once the academic personnel feels that their salary is unjust and significantly lower than the one available in other places, they lose the motivation and organizational commitment, which means they are more likely to leave the organization voluntarily. Negative perceptions of income persistently lead to increased job frustration and low tolerance of other workplace stressors, thus income differences are a powerful push factor to attrition. This indicates that the negative income perceptions are not just present alongside the loss of staff but are also the major determinants in the decision to leave the university system. This result is in line with the results of Yusuf and Ibrahim, (2024) who determined that in cases where university lecturers face financial dissatisfaction caused by earning differentials, their teaching and research efforts reduce substantially, which adversely impacts the quality of education and is a contributor to the overall productivity and stability issues in the Nigerian universities. In line with these, Nina et al. (2023); IseOlorunkanmi et al. (2021) who established that the high rate of academics moving out of the Nigerian university system to work in foreign institutions or the private sector, a phenomenon known as brain drain, has been directly linked to low wages, insufficient funding of research, ineffective infrastructure, and job insecurity with these earnings-based factors being the main catalysts of the staff loss. Furthermore, Hudu (2000) discovered that the lack of satisfaction with earnings in combination with poor working conditions has motivated a significant number of lecturers to look elsewhere in the more secure and stable working environments of private universities or corporate bodies, and that the failure of government policies to overcome underlying remuneration challenges further worsened the area and caused a vicious cycle of loss of academic personnel due to disappointment with low income perceptions and recruitment problems in state universities.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This paper comes to the conclusion that the issue of income differentials is one of the biggest challenges to retention of academic personnel in public universities. The results indicate that academic employees feel that university income is meager, uncompetitive, and not commensurate to the qualifications and experience in comparison to similar positions in other sectors of the economy. The attrition rate of 14.53% recorded by departments also leads to highlighting how harsh the loss of staff is in the university system. Above all, the strong positive correlation between the perception of income differences and the attrition of academic staff proves that the presence of the unfavourable income conditions directly leads to the decision of the academic to leave the university job. The ongoing loss of staff jeopardizes the sustainability of academic programme, pressures on the available staff, reduces research productivity, and compromises the quality and sustainability of higher education in the public universities. Unless there is a conscious policy action to mitigate income inequalities, the public universities are likely to be further drained of the intellectual capital and lose the ability to perform their main mandate of teaching, research, and national building.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were drawn. It is strongly recommended that government and university regulatory bodies take an urgent look and reorganize academic scales of salaries to make them competitive with similar professional jobs in other fields considering qualifications, experience, and workload requirements. Raising salaries with inflation and cost-of-living indexes should be ingrained to avoid the loss of academic remuneration and eradicate income-based dissatisfaction among employees. The universities are advised to adopt specific retention programs like research allowance, housing, performance-based rewards, and sabbatical grants to complement the basic pay and boost job satisfaction. Although it is vital to enhance earnings, universities must also increase the opportunities of research grants, international partnerships, career development, and open promotion to make the academic careers more appealing as a whole. The government, the management of universities and academic unions need to engage in a long term dialogue where the income policies are negotiated to balance the fiscal reality and the necessity to maintain qualified academics, thus lowering the industrial unrest and turnover rates among staff. In response to proactive staff retention policies and long-term human resource planning, the universities ought to keep a constant watch on the trend of attrition and income-based perceptions, based on empirical data.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they do not have any known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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