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**INFLUENCE OF TALENT RETENTION STRATEGIES ON ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE OF LECTURERS AT RONGO UNIVERSITY, KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Despite having human resource policy and procedure manual to guide and govern retention of talents, Rongo University is still having challenges related to employee performance. In 2018, Rongo University was cited as one of the universities that were faced with the challenge of meeting their staff's basic salary needs, payment of NHIF and NSSF. This study therefore sought to investigate the influence of strategic talent management practices on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. To the management of Rongo University, the study provides relevant information to develop strategies in an effort to improve lecturers' academic performance. To the policy makers, the study provides information that can be used in formulation of laws and policies that enhance talent management strategies. The study adds more information to the body of knowledge on talent retention strategies and performance of lecturers. The study used a descriptive research design. The target population of this study was 102 academic staff at Rongo University: graduate assistants, tutorial fellows, assistant lecturers, lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors and professors. The sample size was 82 staff who were selected by use of stratified random sampling. The research made use of primary data together with secondary data. The secondary data source was the annual reports and policies from Rongo University while primary data was gathered through use of semi-structured questionnaires. Thematic analysis was deployed in analyzing qualitative data then presentation of results were in a narrative form. Through the help of SPSS (version 22) quantitative data was analyzed through use of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The research used descriptive statistics in determining mean, frequency distribution and percentage. Inferential statistics comprised of correlation analysis as well as multivariate regression analysis. The research results were presented in tables, bar charts and pie charts. The study established that talent retention strategies have a positive and significant effect on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University ( $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ). This study recommends that Rongo University should seek to provide remuneration and allowances that match their competitors in the same region so as to attract and retain talented academic staff. A promotion policy to guide promotion of academic staff in the institution based on their superior qualities that boost academic performance. In addition, the university should ensure the implementation of policies. The study

found that there is a poor work environment in Rongo University while competitors were having better working conditions.

**Key Words:** *Academic Performance, Talent Retention, Strategies, Universities*

## INTRODUCTION

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century organizations, employees are the most valuable asset as compared to tangible resources like land, capital, and equipment. From planning to implementation of rules and strategies, employees are the core ingredient in an organization (Mahlahla, 2018). One way of ensuring continued employee performance is appropriately using talent management practices, which include talent retention (Ayub, 2017). Talent retention is the process of providing remuneration, job promotion, employee recognition and provision of conducive work environment so as to decrease employee turnover, thereby decreasing training costs, recruitment costs and loss of talent and organizational knowledge. Remuneration is any type of compensation or payment that an individual or employee receives as payment for their services or the work that they do for an organization. Job promotion is vertical movement of an employee within the organization. In other words, promotion refers to the upward movement of an employee from one job to another higher one, with increase in salary, status and responsibilities.

In United States of America, Chuck and Marie (2017) indicated that advocating for the issue of talent management in the government institutions of higher learning entails staff retention and engagement. This involves retaining employees and creating job designs through engaging the leaders, and coming up with an atmosphere of both respect and trust. Higher Education Institutions in India are in an expansion mode and are faced with many challenges regarding the management of capable faculty members. Most of the higher learning institutions in India are growing rapidly and are facing many challenges such as low staff retention rate. In Bangladesh, Tyagi, Singh and Aggarwal (2017) indicate that higher institutions of learning were experiencing 25 per cent attrition rate in academic staff, which results in millions expenses in replacement of professionals including academic staff. In Iran, Kohestany and Yaghoubi (2017) indicated that managing talents through employee recognition and intrinsic rewards positively influenced the performance of lectures in Islamic Azad University. In addition, it was indicated that the university management should pay more attention to the retention of talented lecturers, because the success or failure of the university depends on them.

According to Mahlaha (2018), Africa is not optimally benefiting from its human capacity in both political development and social-economic development as a result of academics leaving their own countries in search of well-paying jobs. Hence there are few professionals capable of offering better academic services to the upcoming generation. In South Africa, Kisoonduth (2017) indicates that most academic staff in Universities had shifted from their general career for at least one time within a period of three years.

In Kenya, Wamwangi and Kagiri (2018) examined the impact of talent retention on staff performance in professional consultancy companies in Kenya and established that talent retention had a significant positive effect on employee performance. However, the research focused on consultancy services firms and hence the findings are not generalizable to public universities. Ng'ethe (2013) indicates that talent retention in higher institutions is questionable more so in terms of payment of salaries. As a result of poor salaries, the teaching staff in Kenya

has been shifting to other countries and even to the private learning institutions in Kenya that offer better salaries and chances for professional development.

The mission for Rongo University is to provide high-quality education through teaching, research, community service and nurture innovative graduates. The University's vision is to be a world class technology driven University in learning and practice. In addition, the core values of the university include integrity and quality, professionalism, innovation and adaptability, equity, teamwork and social responsibility (Rongo University, Annual Report 2018). The university has 7 schools, namely; School of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Studies; School of Arts and Social Sciences; School of Graduate Studies; School of Business and Human Resource Development; School of Information, Communication and Media Studies; School of Education; and School of Science, Technology and Engineering. In terms of excellence Rongo is ranked at position 6,033 (Webometrics, 2019). However, despite having these policies to guide and manage the human resource, the institution is faced with the challenges of academic staff performance. This study therefore sought to examine the influence of talent retention strategies on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There are 22 public universities, 14 chartered private universities and 13 universities with Letter of Interim Authority in Kenya. As a result, competition in both private and the public institutions has increased on this has decreased that number of competent academic staff hence making it pertinent for universities to ensure retention and motivation of talented staff. In addition, academic staff with desired talents are always mobile changing universities and even looking for jobs in different sectors in the country and out of the country (Manyasi, 2012). Employee performance and talent management have become some of the biggest issues in universities in Kenya, because lecturers are the ones who determine the academic performance of their universities. Therefore, talent retention is important in ensuring that universities in Kenya are future oriented, that is to have the right skills in place to be able to perform and grow in the future that is increasingly unpredictable, but not to wait for future challenges before attempting to solve them through talent programs.

Despite having human resource policy and procedure manual to guide and govern retention of talents, Rongo University is still having challenges related to employee performance. In March 2018, Rongo University was cited as one of the universities that is faced with the challenge of meeting their staff's basic salary needs, payment of NHIF and NSSF (Ouma, 2018). This challenge makes public universities turn to part-time lecturers to reduce the wage bill, thus hurting the universities' quality and standards. In addition, the location of the university, which is in Migori County, together with the work environment may also hinder talent retention. It is therefore important to examine the effect of talent retention strategies on academic performance of lecturers.

Many researchers have researched on talent retention strategies and employee performance in Kenya. Knott (2016) conducted a study on the effect talent retention strategies on employee performance among real estate companies in Kenya and found that talent retention strategies affect employee performance. Nonetheless, the study was limited to real-estate companies in Kenya. In addition, Wamwangi and Kagiri (2018) examined the impact of talent retention, as a

component of talent management, on staff performance in professional consultancy companies in Kenya and established that talent retention had a significant positive effect on employee performance. However, the research focused on consultancy services firms and there the results are not generalizable to public universities. Therefore, this study sought to determine the impact of talent retention strategies on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University.

## **Theoretical Framework**

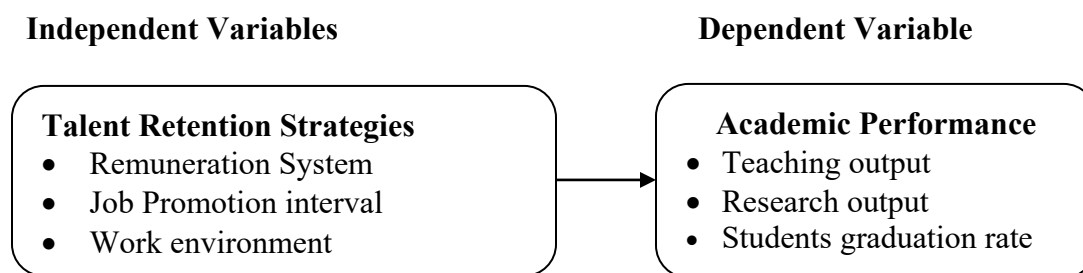
The study was anchored on resource Based View Theory in an attempt to explain the relationship between talent retention strategies and academic staff performance. This theory was developed from the work of Birger Wernerfelt in 1990s. This theory is a managerial framework used in determining the strategic resources with the potential to deliver a competitive advantage to a firm. The theory states that the source of sustainable advantage of an organization is derived from doing things in a superior manner; by developing superior capabilities and resources. Valuable resources enable a firm to implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Rare means that resources should not be available to other competitors. Imperfectly imitable implies means resources should not be easily implemented by others and non-substitutable means that the resources cannot be replaced by some other non-rare resource (Hoopes, Hadsen & Walker, 2013).

The theory provides essential knowledge to strategy makers for evaluation of factors that can be implemented to achieve a competitive advantage. The theory however shows that not all resources are equally important, in that not all resources have the capability of creating sustainable competitive advantage. The degree to which resources can be imitated or substituted depends on the sustainability of that resource. Mihi-Ramirez and Girdauskiene, (2013) indicate that it is difficult to understand the existing relationship between successful strategies and the sources of advantages. Therefore the organization management must work tirelessly towards identification, understanding and classifying the key organizational competencies. Furthermore, the top managers in a firm must ensure massive investment in learning with an aim of nurturing and maintaining key resources and competencies (Hoopes et al., 2013).

In relation to this study, this theory advocates the importance of creating a competitive advantage, through retaining valuable resources like talents. The theory depicts that the valuable capabilities of the firm need to be secured (through retaining the talents) that is kept away from the competitors with an aim of achieving competitive advantage and firm's growth. The performance of an institution increases with improvement in satisfying and retaining human resources (Savanevičienė & Vilčiauskaitė, 2017). An organization will attain its goals, and ensure satisfaction of the stakeholders' interest by taking care of the talents through retention. The theory further advocates for talent nurturing and ensuring they are not taken up by competitors and this can be achieved through talent retention.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The independent variable of this study was talent retention strategies and the dependent variable was academic performance of lecturers. Figure 1 shows the hypothesized relationship between talent retention strategies and academic performance of lecturers.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### Literature Review

Gius (2012) investigated on the influence of academic staff merit pay on academic attainment in United States. The study used a descriptive survey design. Academic staff merit pay was found to have no impact on the performance of students in the university. Academic performance was measured by the graduation rate as well as dropout rate. The research indicated that merit pay for academic staff may be having an inverse effect on academic performance of students. This study is important because its results concur with some studies in this field in that it reveals that academic performance of students is not influenced by merit pay. This study was conducted in the United States, which is a developed country, while Kenya is a developing country.

Nzewi and Chiekezi (2015) studied on remuneration and performance of employees in commercial banks selected in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. The study was descriptive survey. Data used in the study was collected from Guaranteed Trust Bank, Plc and First Bank of Nigeria, Plc Staff using questionnaire as data collection tool. Correlation analysis was used in testing the hypothesis. It was established that employee remuneration influenced employee performance in the banking sector. The study reached a conclusion that talent retention had significant relationship with performance of employees. Banks including other corporate institutions need to enrich job content and offer opportunities for growth with the aim of retaining their talented employees. Additionally, talented employees are resources with the capability of value addition and attainment of competitive advantage to the organization. This study as conducted in commercial banks in Nigeria and hence its findings are not usable in the education sector due to differences in regulatory framework and organizational structures.

Oladapo (2014) did a study on the effects of remuneration on staff performance in Strayer University. The study used descriptive survey design. Target study comprised of the organization staff working in the university. Findings revealed that remuneration influences staff performance in a positive and significant way. The study further revealed that remuneration is an important factor that motivates employees to perform better and do positive things for the organization. Furthermore, employee satisfaction can stimulate a person to behave pro-socially such as positive social behavior, constructive and meaningful help. The study was conducted in the United States, which is a developed country, while this study was conducted in Rongo University located in Kenya, a developing country.

In Malaysia, Mustapha and Zacharia (2013) conducted a study focusing on the relationship between promotion opportunities against job satisfaction among lecturers. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of promotion opportunity on job satisfaction among lecturers in four public universities in Kelantan, Malaysia. Sample was selected through systematic random procedure and data was collected from 320 lecturers using self-administered

questionnaire. Data was then analyzed using descriptive analysis to describe demographic profile of respondents and Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the relationship between variables. The result indicated that there was a positive significant relationship between promotion opportunity and job satisfaction. Organization should consider this variable in promoting satisfaction among employees in order to retain their best brain. The dependent variable in this study was job satisfaction among lecturers, which is different from the academic performance of lecturers.

In Indonesia, Bahri, Sanusi and Asih (2017) conducted a study on the influence of job promotion on lecturer performance in Indonesia. The purpose of the study was to explain the relation between job promotion in universities on lecturer performance. This research is designed using quantitative method and is to explain the relation between job promotion and lecturer performance. The population collected for the purpose of research was 168 lecturers and 158 unit of analysis. Random sampling technique is used. Analysis of description and Equation Model Structural (SEM) are applied to explain the influence between variables. This research concludes that job promotion based on individual satisfaction particularly focuses on the aspect of salary is able to encourage the improvement of lecturer's performance in several Indonesian universities. However, the study was limited to Indonesia whose policies on education are different from those of Kenya in terms of job promotion and expected performance of lecturers.

Lee and Pham (2016) conducted a study on the academic staff working condition and their effectiveness in service delivery in selected colleges in Vietnam. The study used a descriptive research design. Findings reveal working conditions significantly influenced academic staff competence. In addition, the study reveals the following environmental factors that determine teaching competence: working environment, managing the working condition, academic staff relationship, study opportunities and promotion opportunities of the academic staff and working pressure. However, financial investment determines the working conditions according to the study whereas other factors have less dependence on the financial investment as well as top management support and academic staff.

Kasule (2016) conducted a research on the influence of work environment on academic staff job performance in Kyambogo University, Uganda. The research adopted an exploratory research design. Working environment was found to significantly influence lecturers' performance. In addition, this research has profiled various factors related to the work environment that facilitate performance of the academic staff and they include: physical facilities, equipment and workspace for lecturers, working practices and conditions. Nevertheless, it has been revealed that at Kyambogo University these factors are underestimated and this is a point of concern. However, Rongo University is experiencing financial constraints and this has inhibited development of physical facilities such as lecturer halls, hostels and fully equipped library.

Ouma and Munyua (2018) conducted a study on the relationship between teachers' working conditions and performance of students in Kenya. By use of a descriptive research design, the study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' working conditions and performance of students. It was further revealed that poor working conditions and inadequate teaching materials together with learning materials were the major de-motivators of teachers towards good academic performance. From the reviewed literature it is clear that retention strategies affect performance. Thus a review of the current strategies available in

Rongo University for academic staff is critical. In such a review issues such as working conditions, pension, equipment, facilities, remuneration and job promotions are of essence.

### Research Methodology

The research adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population of this study was 102 academic staff in Rongo University who included graduate assistants, tutorial fellows, assistant lecturers, lecturers, senior lecturers and associate professors and professors. The sample size in this research was determined through use of Slovin's Formula. The research adopted this formula as it considers the entire population.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + NE^2}$$

Where by: n = no. of samples; N = total population; E = error margin / margin of error (0.05); \*= multiplication sign

$$n = \frac{102}{1 + (102 * 0.05^2)}$$

$$n = 82$$

**Table 1: Sample Size**

Academic Staff	Target Population	Sample Size
Graduate Assistants	3	3
Tutorial fellows	18	14
Assistant Lecturers	9	8
Lecturers	45	36
Senior lecturers	8	6
Associate professors	14	11
Professors	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>82</b>

In this research stratified random sampling was employed to select 82 academic staff from the target population. The strata in this research was different categories of academic staff namely, graduate assistants, tutorial fellows, assistant lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors. Stratified random sampling was used in this research since it was suitable in selecting a sample size that best depicts the entire population. This sampling technique was suitable since it has minimal chances of bias in sample selection it also ensures no over representation of some segments or under representation. The number of academic staff per category was selected through proportionate sampling. Further sample size per category was selected through proportionate stratification.

The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was sourced from the Rongo University's annual reports. The researcher used 102 semi structured questionnaires to gather primary data from the Graduate Assistants, Assistant Lecturers, Tutorial Fellows, Lecturers and Senior Lecturers. An interview schedule was used for professors and associate professors in order to triangulate the information gathered from lecturers. Interview questions were aligned to the research objectives. A pilot study was conducted to enhance the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The research used a Document Analysis Guide for analysis of University documents namely; annual reports and policy documents including Human Resource Procedure

Manual, staff training and development policy and research policy.

The research instruments generated both quantitative and qualitative data. Thematic analysis was adopted in analysing qualitative data where the findings were presented in a narrative form. The research adopted both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics with the assistance of SPSS (version 22) to analyse quantitative data. Descriptive statistics included standard deviation, mean, frequency distribution tables and percentage. Inferential statistics included Correlation Analysis together with Regression Analysis. The research results were then depicted in tables and figures (pie charts). The Multi Regression model was as follows;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Whereby; Y = Academic performance of lecturers;  $B_0$  = Constant;  $\beta_1$  =Coefficients of determination;  $X_1$  = Talent retention strategies; and  $\varepsilon$  = Error term

### Research Findings and Discussions

The sample size of this study was 82 academic staff in Rongo University. Out of the 82 questionnaires that were distributed, 71 were filled and returned, which gave a response rate of 86.6%. However, a return rate of 100% was not achieved as some of the responses had inconsistent information while others were incomplete thus could not be used for analysis in this study. According to Kothari (2012), a return rate which is above 50% is adequate for data analysis thus the response rate of 86.6% was within the acceptable limit for drawing conclusions.

### Talent Retention Strategies

From the findings, 66.2% of the respondents agreed with the statement indicating that Rongo University provides leave traveling allowance. However 56.8% of the respondents disagreed, 22.5% strongly disagreed and 12.4% agreed with the statement indicating that Rongo University provides overtime allowance. In addition, 29.6% of the respondents disagreed and 26.8% agreed with the statement indicating that Rongo University pays an allowance that matches with other academic institutions. Further, 32.4% of the respondents disagreed and 28.2% were neutral on the statement indicating that lecturers' salaries can cater for all their needs. Also, 32.4% of the respondents disagreed and 29.6% strongly disagreed with the statement indicating that Rongo University provides baggage allowance. These findings are in line with Kohestany and Yaghoubi (2017) argument that managing talents through intrinsic rewards positively influenced the performance of lectures in Islamic Azad University.

**Table 2: Remuneration and Academic Performance**

Remuneration	1		2		3		4		5	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
Lecturers' salary can cater for all my needs	19.7	14	32.4	23	28.2	20	12.7	9	7	5
Rongo University provides Leave travelling allowance	1.4	1	1.4	1	2.8	2	66.2	47	28.2	20
Rongo University pays Overtime allowance	22.5	16	56.8	40	3.9	3	12.4	9	5.8	4



Rongo University pays Baggage allowance	29.6	21	32.4	23	11.3	8	12.7	9	14.1	10
Rongo university pays allowance that matches with other academic institutions	19.7	14	29.6	21	15.5	11	26.8	19	8.5	6

The respondents were requested to indicate their agreement level on various statements relating to the effect of job promotion on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. According to the results, 45.1% of the respondents agreed and 25.4% strongly agreed that the promotion of staff in Rongo University is based on effective performance in research and teaching. In addition, 43.7% of the respondents agreed and 21.1% strongly agreed that the education and experience level is considered in promotion of lecturers. Also, 33.8% of the respondents agreed, 19.7% were neutral and the same percent (19.7%) disagreed with the statement indicating that lecturers who actively participate in the affair of the department are promoted to senior positions. These findings are in line Asif, Fakhra, Tahir & Shabbir (2016) findings that job promotion was key in ensuring talent retention and significantly influences the performance of academic staff.

**Table 3: Job Promotion and Academic Performance**

Promotion of academic staff	1		2		3		4		5	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
Promotion of staff in Rongo University is based on effective performance in research and teaching	4.2	3	9.9	7	15.5	11	45.1	32	25.4	18
The education and experience level is considered in promotion of lecturers	5.6	4	8.6	6	21.1	15	43.7	31	21.1	15
Lecturers who actively participate in the affair of the department are promoted to senior positions	12.7	9	19.7	14	19.7	14	33.8	24	14.1	10

The respondents were requested to indicate their agreement level on various statements relating to the effect of employee recognition on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. From the findings, 29.6% of the respondents agreed, 23.9% strongly disagreed and 22.5% strongly disagreed with the statement indicating that Rongo University rewards lecturers who conduct research. In addition, 35.2% strongly disagreed and 23.9% disagreed with the statement indicating that Rongo University provides certificate of merits to academic staff who are performing well. Further, 32.4% of the respondents disagreed and 26.8% strongly disagreed with the statement that lecturers who attain their targets are awarded for their achievements. In addition, 33.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 25.4% disagreed with the statement indicating that Rongo University has initiated awards giving day programs as a way of recognizing academic staff.

**Table 4: Employee Recognition and Academic Performance**

Employee Recognition	1		2		3		4		5	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F

Rongo university rewards lecturers who conduct research	23.9	17	22.5	16	18.3	13	29.6	21	5.6	4
Rongo university provides certificate of merits to academic staff who are performing well	35.2	25	23.9	17	25.4	18	9.9	7	5.6	4
Lecturers who attain their targets are awarded for their achievements	26.8	19	32.4	23	21.1	15	16.9	12	2.8	2
Rongo university has initiated awards giving day programs as a way of recognizing academic staff	33.8	24	25.4	18	29.6	21	9.9	7	1.4	1

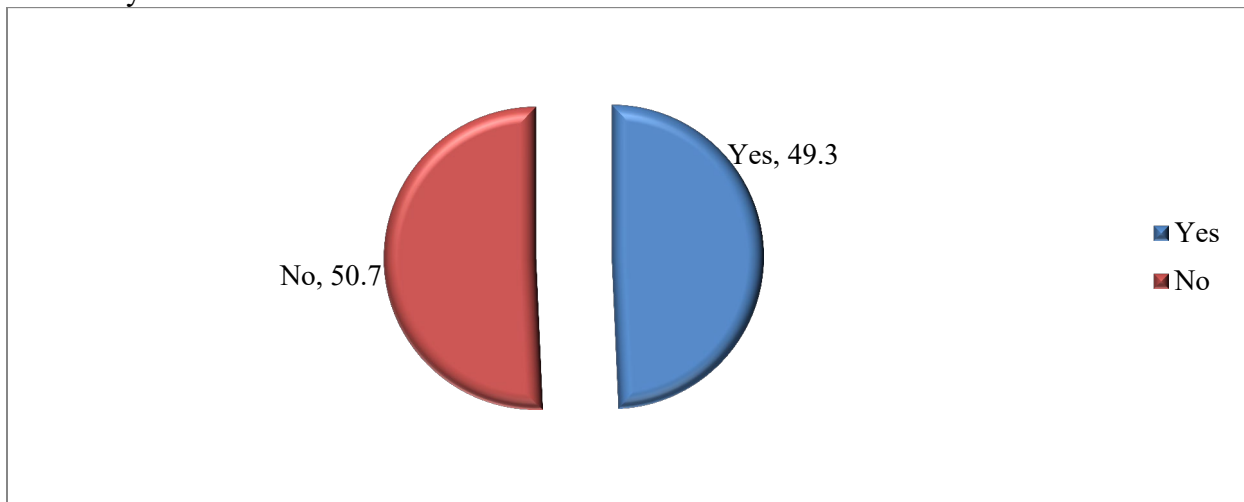
The respondents were requested to indicate their agreement level on various statements relating to the effect of work environment on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. From the findings, 45.1% of the respondents agreed with the statement indicating that Rongo University provides lecturers with office equipment such as tables. In addition, 38.0% of the respondents agreed and 23.9% were neutral on the statement indicating that Rongo University provides lecturers with office equipment such as chairs. Further, 31.0% of the respondents agreed, the same percent (31.0%) strongly disagreed and 26.8% disagreed with the statement indicating that Rongo University provides lecturers with office equipment such as printers.

Also, 39.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 22.5% disagreed with the statement indicating that Rongo University provides lecturers with office equipment such as computers. In addition, 32.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 25.4% disagreed with the statement indicating that there is good communication between the administration and the lecturers. Further, 42.3% of the respondents' strongly disagreed and 25.4% disagreed with the statement indicating that Rongo University has adequate office space for lecturers. These findings are supported by the key informants' argument that there were no adequate facilities, desktop Computers, offices and equipment in Rongo University and hence the work environment was difficult. These findings concur with Ouma (2018) findings that the location of the university, which is in Migori County, together with the work environment may also hinder talent attraction.

**Table 5: Work Environment and Academic Performance**

Work Environment	1		2		3		4		5	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
There is good communication between the administration and the lecturers	32.4	23	25.4	18	23.9	17	16.9	12	1.4	1
Rongo university has adequate office space for lecturers	42.3	30	25.4	18	8.5	6	19.7	14	4.2	3
Desktop Computers	39.4	28	22.5	16	8.5	6	25.4	18	4.2	3
Printers	31	22	26.8	19	9.9	7	31	22	1.4	1
Chairs	25.4	18	11.3	8	23.9	17	38	27	1.4	1
Tables	22.5	16	11.3	8	21.1	15	45.1	32	0	0

The respondents were asked to indicate whether given a choice they would continue working at Rongo University. From the findings, 49.3% (35) of the respondents indicated that given a choice they would continue working at Rongo University while 50.7% (36) indicated that given a choice they would not continue working at Rongo University. These findings agree with Tyagi, Singh and Aggarwal (2017) findings that higher institutions of learning experience high turnover rate. This implies that the majority of academic staff given a choice they would not continue working at Rongo University which a serious trend to worry since this will hinder retention and impacts greatly on the performance of both staff and general academic performance at the University.



**Figure 2: Continued Working in Rongo University**

### **Academic performance**

The dependent variable for this study was academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. In a scale of 1 to 10, most of the key informants (professors) rated the academic performance of lecturers in Rongo University as 7. Specifically, quality was rated as 7 and commitment was rated as 6. The key informants also indicated that the curriculum was shallow and needed review and development. They also indicated that lecturers do good job especially part-timers, but regular lecturers are not doing their best not working hard.

The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement level on various statements relating to academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. Where 1 represents strongly disagree, 2 represents disagree, 3 represents neutral, 4 represents agree and 5 represents strongly agree. From the findings, 53.5% of the respondents agreed that Rongo University has a class capacity that they can manage. However, 39.4% of the respondents agreed and 18.3 strongly agreed that the student-staff ratio at Rongo University is high. These findings agree with Webometrics (2019) report that compared to other public universities in Kenya, Rongo University attraction of students is low and hence there was no congestion in classes and lecture rooms. This implies that performance can be hindered by this high number of students through the lecturers agree that the classes that they have are manageable.

The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement level on various statements relating to teaching output at Rongo University. Where 1 represents strongly disagree, 2 represents disagree, 3 represents neutral, 4 represents agree and 5 represents strongly agree. According to

the results, 64.8% of the respondents agreed that they complete their teaching content within the set time frame. In addition, 64.8% of the respondents agreed that most of their students score good grades in their exams. Further, 33.8% of the respondents agreed and 31.0% were neutral on the statement indicating that there has been an increase in the number of students who score first class degrees. Though the academic staff indicated that they complete teaching in time and that the students they teach score good grades, most of them are unsure of the general scores of the students at the end of the course as they graduate.

According to the results, 67.6% of the respondents agreed that they have a number of research publications. In addition, 32.4% of the respondents were neutral, 31.0% strongly disagreed and 26.8% agreed that Rongo University funds their research projects. This implies that most academic staff have published at least more than two publications, though funding was not done by Rongo University. Though some were uncertain whether the University funds the research projects. Funding seems to be lacking at Rongo University.

From the findings, 52.1% of the respondents agreed that most of the students in Rongo University under the undergraduate category, graduate within the stipulated time. In addition, 50.7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement indicating that most of the students in Rongo University under the masters' category graduate, within the stipulated time. Further, 54.9% of the respondents disagreed with the statement indicating that most of the students in Rongo University under the PhD category graduate within the stipulated time. Also, 31.0% of the respondents agreed and 28.2% disagreed with the statement indicating that most of the academic research at Rongo University enhances new scientific discoveries. These results indicate that the undergraduate students graduate at the stipulated time whereas the Masters Students and PhD students seem to take a longer time.

**Table 6: Students Graduation Rate of Rongo University**

	1	2	3	4	5
I have a class capacity that I can manage	1.4	15.5	14.1	53.5	15.5
The student –staff ratio at Rongo university is high	18.3	15.5	8.5	39.4	18.3
Most of my students score good grades in their exams	9.9	8.5	14.1	64.8	2.8
There has been an increase in the number of students who score first class degrees	5.6	29.6	31.0	33.8	0.0
I complete my teaching content within the set time frame	0.0	11.3	14.1	64.8	9.9
I have more than two research publications	7.0	2.8	11.3	67.6	11.3
Rongo university funds my research projects	31.0	9.9	32.4	26.8	0.0
Most of the academic research at Rongo university enhances new scientific discoveries	12.7	28.2	26.8	31.0	1.4
Undergraduate	0.0	5.6	12.7	29.6	52.1
Masters	9.9	50.7	21.1	15.5	2.8
PhD	12.7	54.9	18.3	11.3	2.8

### Inferential Statistics

Correlation and regression analysis were used to examine the influence of independent variables (staff training and development) on the dependent variable (academic performance of lecturers at Rongo university).

### Correlation Analysis (Talent Retention strategies)

The study used Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis to assess the association between independent variables (talent retention strategies) and academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University (dependent variable). The results also showed a positive association between talent retention strategies and academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University ( $r=0.549$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000$ ). The association was considered significant as the  $p\text{-value}$  0.000 was less than the significant level of this study which was 0.05. These findings agree with Asif, Fakhra, Tahir and Shabbir (2016) findings that talent retention strategies such as staff recognition, remuneration and job promotion significantly influence job satisfaction of teachers thus minimizes the rate of job burn out.

**Table 7: Correlation Coefficients**

		Academic performance	Talent retention strategies
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	71	
Talent retention strategies	Pearson Correlation	.549**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	71	71

### Regression analysis (Talent Retention Strategies)

Regression analysis was used to assess the association between the independent variable (talent retention strategies) and the dependent variable (academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University).

The regression equation was;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Whereby; Y = academic performance of lecturers;  $X_1$  = Talent Retention Strategies;  $\varepsilon$  = Error Term;  $\beta_0$  = Constant Term;  $\beta_1$ - $\beta_3$  = Independent variables Beta Co-efficient.

The R-squared shows the variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable being studied. The R-squared in this study was 0.301. This implied that the independent variable (talent retention strategies) could explain 30.1% of academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University.

**Table 8: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.549 <sup>a</sup>	.301	.291	.40253

a. Predictors: (Constant), Talent retention strategies

The analysis of variance shows whether or not a model is a good fit for the data. The F-calculated (29.768) was greater than the F-critical (4.0012) and the  $p\text{-value}$  (0.000) was less than the significance level (0.05) and hence the model was suitable in depicting the data. This implied

that the model could be used in predicting the influence talent retention strategies on the dependent variable (academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University).

**Table 9: Analysis of Variance**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.823	1	4.823	29.768	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	11.180	69	.162		
	Total	16.003	70			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Talent retention strategies

The regression model was as follows;

$$Y = 1.897 + 0.452X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Talent retention strategies also have a positive and significant effect on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University as shown by a regression coefficient of 0.452. The effect of talent retention strategies on academic performance of lecturers was statistically significant because the p-value (0.000) was less than the significance level (0.05). The findings agree with Lee and Pham (2016) findings that work environment has a significant effect on academic staff job performance in Kyambogo University, Uganda.

The University was to some extent losing staff to other Universities (competitors) and most of the staff indicated that given a different they would go to other universities. However, the application of talent retention strategies make individuals feel their services are recognized and appreciated, boost morale, motivate staff, ensure dedication and commitment, enhance job mastery, ensure continuity in innovation, increases commitment, gives confidence and ensures improvement in loyalty.

**Table 10: Regression Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1.897	.244	7.772	.000
	Talent retention strategies	.452	.083	.549	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Academic performance

## Conclusion

The study concludes that talent retention strategies have a positive and significant effect on academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. Talent retention strategies make individuals feel their services are recognized and appreciated, boost morale, motivate staff, ensure dedication and commitment, enhance job mastery, ensure continuity in innovation, increases commitment, gives confidence and ensures improvement in loyalty. However, majority of academic staff given a choice they would not continue working at Rongo University. In addition, to some extent, Rongo University was losing academic staff to competitors. The study found that remuneration in Rongo University were not matching that of competitors. In addition, Rongo University does not award or provide certificate of merits to academic staff who are

performing well and hence had not initiated prize giving day programs as a way of recognizing academic staff). The work environment for the staff was not satisfactory and was characterized by inadequate office space and office equipment such as tables, chairs, printers and computers.

### **Recommendations**

This study recommends that Rongo University should seek to provide remuneration and allowances that match their competitors in the same region so as to attract and retain talented academic staff. A promotion policy to guide promotion of academic staff in the institution based on their superior qualities that boost academic performance. In addition, the university should ensure the implementation of policies. The study found that there is a poor work environment in Rongo University while competitors were having better working conditions. This study therefore recommends an improvement in the working conditions of Rongo University by improving office space, computers, printers, chairs, tables among other resources.

### **Areas of further Research (Talent Retention Strategies)**

This study looked on talent retention strategies and academic performance of lecturers and hence obtained information from lecturers. However, the lecturers could have been biased in rating their academic performance. The study therefore suggests future studies to focus on both lecturers and students, who are the customers in public universities. This study was limited to Rongo University, which is one of the public universities in Kenya. Therefore, the findings are not generalizable to other public and private universities in Kenya. The study therefore suggests comparative studies on talent retention strategies and academic performance of lecturers in other public universities and private universities in Kenya. The study found that talent retention strategies could only explain 30.1% of the academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University. The study therefore suggests further studies on other factors affecting the academic performance of lecturers at Rongo University.

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