

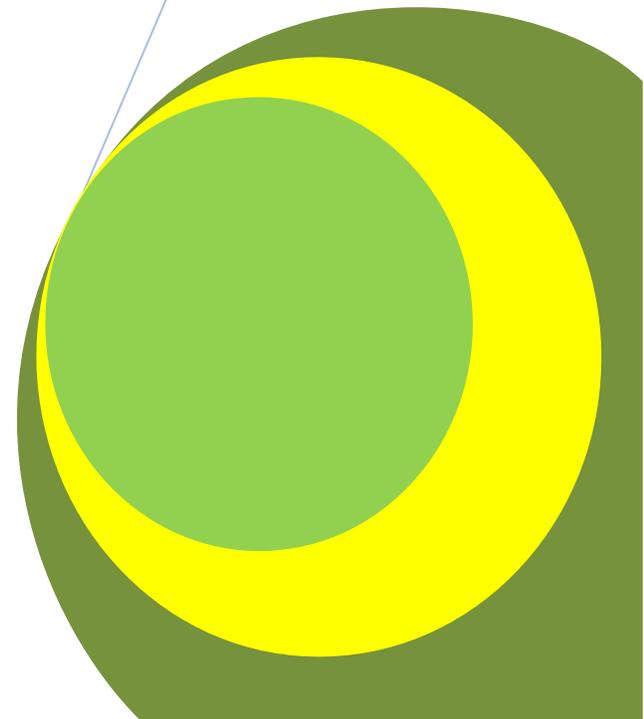
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Factors Causing Staff Turnover at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

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Research Article

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ABSTRACT

High staff turnover affects the smooth running of institutions. This study established factors causing staff turnover in Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST). Specific objective of the study was: to investigate factors causing staff turnover at MMUST. A conceptual framework formed the basis of this study. Correlational research design was used in this study. Cluster random sampling procedure was used to collect data. Questionnaires, interviews, document analysis and observation were blended to capture authentic and exhaustive data. A randomly selected sample of 25 departments was used in this study. A total of 152 respondents participated. Data were analyzed using inferential and descriptive statistics. The study established that dissatisfaction with conditions of work; insufficient career development opportunities at place of work; Bullying and harassment at place of work; the job or workplace not living to the employees' expectations; Mismatch between the person and the job; Employees feeling devalued and unrecognized; Stresses from overwork and work/ life imbalance; Loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders; and Poor relationship with colleagues are some of the causes of staff turnover at MMUST. The study recommends that the University improves on mechanisms of addressing causes of staff turnover to improve on staff retention.

Keywords: Non teaching departments, Non teaching staff, Performance of Work, Retention rate, Staff turnover, Teaching departments, Teaching Staff.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources professionals continually work to control their companies' employee retention and turnover rates. Retention is the term given to keeping loyal employees on board with their company. Turnover is the term given to the rate at which the employer lose existing employees and replace them with new ones. According to Babcock (2005), understanding employee retention and turnover, and how you can use each to your advantage, can enhance your human resources policies and build a productive workforce.

Retaining employees carries obvious advantages. Armstrong (2001) observed that long-term employees generally have higher productivity and efficiency on the job than newer employees, due to their length of experience with the firm. Loyal employees also improve operational processes and train incoming employees. According to Cole (2002), loyal employees can also be loyal customers and avoid word-of-mouth advertisers in certain cases. Especially for manufacturers and sellers of consumer products, loyal employees' entire families sometimes purchase and use the products.

Higher pay can be justified by the higher productivity of experienced workers, but there comes a point at which the law of diminishing returns sets in. The law of diminishing returns states that, for every additional unit of investment in certain situations, you receive less of a marginal return (Elliot, 1991).

Beer (1981) observed that employee turnover incurs opportunity costs to employers. As experienced workers are replaced by new hires, productivity can drop dramatically. Not only are new hires very unproductive compared to experienced workers, but trainers' productivity drops during training periods as well. The cost of placing employment advertisements and paying headhunters must be factored in as well. The advantage of high turnover is the lower labor expenses associated with employees not sticking around long enough for pay raises. Companies offering

positions that do not require skilled labor benefit from the labor-cost savings of higher turnover (Egan, 1995). Staff turnover can have a negative effect on an organization. It can lead to a loss of productivity, profitability, corporate

knowledge, and skills and competencies. In addition, staff turnover is not just an issue for the organization experiencing staff turnover; it can also cause headaches for external organizations communicating with them.

It can be hard to maintain a relationship with an organization with high staff turnover, and it can be difficult to know how to effectively communicate with them through this period. Often correspondence between organizations relies on staff-to-staff communication, and the loss of one of these members affects the way the organizations interact. However, as stakeholders and indeed institutions have experienced staff turnover, it has become one of those things that are expected and must be planned for. At MMUST, records indicate that 16 staff members left for other institutions in the year 2009. In 2010, the number increased to 21, and in 2011 the number increased to 26. This is a worrying trend. Therefore there is need to investigate the root cause of staff turnover and address it. It is on the basis of this that this study is designed to address the impact of staff turnover at MMUST.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. It covered 152 out of 460 staff on permanent and pensionable terms, stratified on the basis of academic and non academic departments.

In this study, a correlational research design was utilized. According to Cohen *et al.* (2005), correlational research design, a statistical measure of a relationship between two or more variables, gives an indication of how one variable may predict another. The study population comprised of 1,000 teaching and non teaching staff. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample 7 heads of departments while simple random sampling was used to select 42 lecturers, 30 administrators, 14 technicians, 18 secretaries and 41 clerical staff and office assistants. Data collection Instruments used were questionnaires for staff and heads of departments, interview schedules for heads of departments, document analysis and observation checklist. The instruments were validated using content validity. The reliability of the questionnaires was determined through the calculation of a correlation coefficient (Cohen *et al.*, 2005) between the first administration and the second. The computed correlation coefficient was 0.785 and significant ($P < 0.05$) considered sufficient for the instruments to be used in the study. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequencies and percentages and chi square respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSIONS

This chapter presents the results derived from the process of data analysis.

Table 1: Dissatisfaction with conditions of work

Response	Staff	Rank	H.O.Ds	Rank
Strongly Disagree	6(4.1)	4	0(0%)	3
Disagree	16(11.0)	3	0(0%)	3
Undecided	0(0%)	5	0(0%)	3
Agree	63(43.4)	1	4(57.1%)	1
Strongly Agree	60(39.5)	2	3(42.9%)	2

A Spearman Rank Order Correlation (r) was calculated to ascertain if there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlation in the responses between staff and heads of departments. The following results were obtained:

$$r = 0.1 \pm 0.44; P.E._r = 0.30$$

The calculated value of r is less than six times the probable error (P.E._r) hence the value of r is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, there was a statistically significant differences existing ($p < 0.05$) between responses by staff and those of heads of departments.

As indicated in Table 1, the findings of this study indicate that, majority, 130(85.5%) respondents agreed that staff exit from employment because of dissatisfaction with conditions of work. Specifically, 63(43.4%) staff and 4(57.1%) heads of departments agreed; and 60(39.5%) staff and 3 (42.9%) heads of departments strongly agreed. However, 22(14.5%) respondents disagreed. Specifically, 16(11.0%) staff and none of the heads of departments

disagreed; 6(4.1%) staff and none of the heads of departments strongly disagreed; none of the student and heads of departments was undecided. On the overall, the picture presented by the results of this study indicates staff turnover

in organizations is caused by dissatisfaction with the conditions of work. Employees prefer working in environments that are pleasant and accommodative. The conditions of work, for instance, provision of enough working space, equipment, optimum temperature, and moisture etc motivate employees to remain in employment. Whenever the employer does not provide good working conditions, employees will seek for employment in institutions that provide good working conditions. Robbins (2005) observes that employees have tendencies of comparing working conditions in organizations where they are employed with other organizations. This provides them with an opportunity to discover greener pastures which they seek to attain.

Table 2: Turnover by insufficient career development opportunities at place of work

Response	Staff	Rank	H.O.Ds	Rank
Strongly Disagree	8(5.5%)	4	0(0%)	4
Disagree	23(15.9%)	3	0(0%)	4
Undecided	2(1.3%)	5	1(14.2%)	3
Agree	59 (40.7%)	1	3(42.9%)	1
Strongly Agree	53(36.6%)	2	3(42.9%)	1

A Spearman Rank Order Correlation (r) was calculated to ascertain if there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlation in the responses between staff and heads of departments. The following results were obtained:

$$r = 0.75 \pm 0.20; P.E._r = 0.132$$

The calculated value of r is greater than six times the probable error (P.E._r) hence the value of r is significantly ($p < 0.01$) different from zero correlation coefficient. Therefore, there were no statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) differences between responses by staff and those of the heads of departments. The findings of this study (Table 2) indicate that, majority, 118(77.6%) respondents agreed that staff exit from employment because of insufficient career development opportunities at place of work. Specifically, 59(40.7%) staff and 3(42.9%) heads of departments agreed; and 53(36.6%) staff and 3(42.9%) heads of departments strongly agreed. However, 34(22.4%) respondents disagreed. Specifically, 23(15.9%) staff and none of the heads of departments disagreed; 8(5.5%) staff and none of the heads of departments strongly disagreed; 2(1.3%) staff and 1(14.2%) head of department were undecided. On the overall, the picture presented by the results of this study indicates staff turnover in organizations is caused by insufficient career development opportunities at place of work.

Employees in all organizations are always looking forward to being promoted. When an employee stagnates in one position for too long, he or she loses morale of work. He or she becomes disinterested in whatever she does. Career development is considered as one way of keeping employees in high spirit. An organization that provides opportunities for career development for its employees motivates them and makes them to know that they have something worth looking forward to. Van Breukelen et al. (2004) argue that allowing employees opportunities to grow in turn, motivates staff, increases productivity and reduces on wastage thus increasing the profits of the organization.

The findings of this study agree with Sparrow (1996) who observes that insufficient career development opportunities at place of work causes staff turnover. Insufficient career opportunities at place of work make staff to stagnate in one position for a long period of time. When staff works in the same position over a long period of time, their morale reduces and thus it affects their work out put. Staff in organizations insufficient career development opportunities will therefore seek for other opportunities outside the organization.

Table 3: bullying and harassment at place of work

Response	Staff	Rank	H.O.Ds	Rank
Strongly Disagree	3(2.1%)	4	4(57.1%)	1
Disagree	10(6.9%)	3	3(42.9%)	2
Undecided	5(3.4%)	5	0(0%)	3
Agree	66(45.5%)	1	0(0%)	3
Strongly Agree	61(42.1)	2	0(0%)	3

A Spearman Rank Order Correlation (r) was calculated to ascertain if there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlation in the responses between staff and heads of departments. The following results were obtained: $r = 0.5 \pm 0.34$; P.E._r = 0.23.

The calculated value of r is less than six times the probable error (P.E._r) hence the value of r is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, there was a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) differences between responses by staff and those of heads of departments.

The findings of this study (Table 3) indicate that, majority, 127(83.6%) respondents agreed that staff exit from employment because of bullying and harassment at place of work. Specifically, 66(45.5%) staff and none of the heads of departments agreed; and 61(42.1%) staff and none of the heads of departments strongly agreed. However, 25(16.4%) respondents disagreed. Specifically, 10(6.9%) staff and 3(42.9%) heads of departments disagreed; 3(2.1%) staff and 4(57.1%) heads of departments strongly disagreed; 5(3.4%) staff and none of the heads of department were undecided. On the overall, the picture presented by the results of this study indicates staff turnover in organizations is caused by bullying and harassment at place of work. Locke (1976) observes that bullying at place of work is one of the reasons that cause dissatisfaction among employees leading them to exit from organizations. The results of this study agree with such observation. Staff will always feel comfortable to work with a supervisor whom they understand and who also understands them well. When a supervisor keeps harassing those whom he/she supervises, those supervised will lose interest in what they do, develop negative attitude towards their work, their department and even the whole institution where they work and finally decide to quit from the organization.

Table 4: Job or work place not living to employees' expectations

Response	Staff	Rank	H.O.Ds	Rank
Strongly Disagree	22(15.2%)	3	0(0%)	4
Disagree	21(14.5%)	4	0(0%)	4
Undecided	10(6.9%)	5	1(14.2%)	3
Agree	39(26.9%)	2	3(42.9%)	1
Strongly Agree	53(36.5%)	1	3(42.9%)	1

A Spearman Rank Order Correlation (r) was calculated to ascertain if there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlation in the responses between staff and heads of departments. The following results were obtained:

$$r = 0.75 \pm 0.20; \text{P.E.}_r = 0.132$$

The calculated value of r is greater than six times the probable error (P.E._r) hence the value of r is significantly ($p < 0.01$) different from zero correlation coefficient. Therefore, there were no statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) differences between responses by staff and those of the heads of departments. The findings of this study (Table 4) indicate that, majority, 98(64.5%) respondents agreed that staff exit from employment because the job or work place does not live to the employees' expectations. Specifically, 39(26.9%) staff and 3(42.9%) heads of departments agreed; and 53(36.5%) staff and 3(42.9%) heads of departments strongly agreed. However, 54(35.5%) respondents disagreed. Specifically, 21(14.5%) staff and none of the heads of departments disagreed; 22(15.2%) staff and none of the heads of departments strongly disagreed; 10(16.9%) staff and 1(14.2%) head of department were undecided. On the overall, the picture presented by the results of this study indicates staff turnover in organizations happens because the job or work place does not live to the employees' expectations.

According to Tampoe (1993), employees have their expectations when they are engaged by an organization. The continued stay of these employees in the organization is dependent on whether the organization satisfies their expectations. The findings of this study indicate that when the job or workplaces do not live up to the employees' expectations, the employee will opt to look for alternative areas of employment. It is true that employees get job satisfaction when and if the job and the organization they are employed in live up to their expectations. Satisfying the employees' expectations creates a sense of belonging in the employees and makes them not to think of seeking for jobs elsewhere. It also creates confidence in the employees and gives them assurance of job security.

Table 5: Mismatch between the person and the job

Response	Staff	Rank	H.O.Ds	Rank
Strongly Disagree	29(20.0%)	4	0(0%)	3
Disagree	33(22.8%)	3	0(0%)	3

Undecided	6(4.1%)	5	0(0%)	3
Agree	39(26.9%)	2	1(14.3%)	2
Strongly Agree	38(26.2%)	1	6(85.7%)	1

A Spearman Rank Order Correlation (r) was calculated to ascertain if there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlation in the responses between staff and heads of departments. The following results were obtained:

$$r = 0.75 \pm 0.20; P.E._r = 0.132$$

The calculated value of r is greater than six times the probable error (P.E._r) hence the value of r is significantly ($p < 0.01$) different from zero correlation coefficient. Therefore, there were no statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) differences between responses by staff and those of the heads of departments. The findings of this study (Table 5) indicate that, majority, 77(50.7%) respondents agreed that staff exit from employment because of mismatch between the person and the job. Specifically, 39(26.9%) staff and 1(14.3%) head of department agreed; and 38(26.2%) staff and 6(87.5%) heads of departments strongly agreed. However, 75(49.3%) respondents disagreed. Specifically, 33(22.8%) staff and none of the heads of departments disagreed; 29(20.0%) staff and none of the heads of departments strongly disagreed; 6(4.1%) staff and none of the heads of departments were undecided. On the overall, the picture presented by the results of this study indicates staff turnover in organizations happens because of mismatch between the person and the job. Mismatch between the employee and the job creates insecurity among employees (Derek et al., 2008). It first of all removes confidence from the employee as the employees' conscience will always remind him/her that he/she is not the best person to do that job. The findings of this study agree with the observation. Majority, 77(50.7%) respondents indicated that mismatch between the employee and the job causes staff turnover. A good number of staff exit from employment at MMUST because they felt they were engaged in jobs which did not match their qualifications. This mismatch causes discontent in the staff and makes them feel underutilized in employment. It also affects their attitude towards work and the organization.

Table 6: Feeling devalued and unrecognized

Response	Staff	Rank	H.O.Ds	Rank
Strongly Disagree	17(11.7%)	4	0(0%)	3
Disagree	21(14.5%)	3	0(0%)	3
Undecided	12(8.3%)	5	0(0%)	3
Agree	44(36.8%)	2	2(28.6%)	2
Strongly Agree	51(35.2%)	1	5(71.4%)	1

A Spearman Rank Order Correlation (r) was calculated to ascertain if there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlation in the responses between students and deputy principals. The following results were obtained:

$$r = 0.75 \pm 0.20; P.E._r = 0.132$$

The calculated value of r is greater than six times the probable error (P.E._r) hence the value of r is significantly ($p < 0.01$) different from zero correlation coefficient. Therefore, there were no statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) differences between responses by staff and heads of departments. The findings of this study (Table 6) indicate that, majority, 95(62.5%) respondents agreed that staff exit from employment because of staff feeling devalued and unrecognized. Specifically, 44(36.8%) staff and 2(28.6%) heads of departments agreed; and 51(35.2%) staff and 5(71.4%) heads of departments strongly agreed. However, 57(37.5%) respondents disagreed. Specifically, 21(14.5%) staff and none of the heads of departments disagreed; 17(11.7%) staff and none of the heads of departments strongly disagreed; 12(8.3%) staff and none of the heads of departments were undecided. On the overall, the picture presented by the results of this study indicates staff turnover in organizations happens because of staff feeling devalued and unrecognized. Staffs who feel devalued and unrecognized in employment end up being a liability to the organization (Derek et al., 2008). When an organization recognizes staff, and what they do, it enhances morale and motivates them to work even harder. This study's results indicate that when staffs are not recognized, they feel they have outlived their usefulness in the organization and therefore seek to go where their services can be appreciated. Even if they do not exit immediately, they work half-heartedly hoping that other avenues open up for them to exit from their current stations.

Table 7: Stresses from overwork and work/life imbalance

Response	Staff	Rank	H.O.Ds	Rank
Strongly Disagree	6(4.1%)	4	0(0%)	3
Disagree	16(11.0%)	3	0(0%)	3
Undecided	0(0%)	5	0(0%)	3
Agree	63(43.5%)	1	4(57.1%)	1
Strongly Agree	60(41.4%)	2	3(42.9%)	2

A Spearman Rank Order Correlation (r) was calculated to ascertain if there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlation in the responses between staff and heads of departments. The following results were obtained:

$$r = 0.75 \pm 0.20; P.E._r = 0.132$$

The calculated value of r is greater than six times the probable error (P.E._r) hence the value of r is significantly ($p < 0.01$) different from zero correlation coefficient. Therefore, there were no statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) differences between responses by staff and those of heads of departments. The findings of this study (Table 7) indicate that, majority, 130(85.5%) respondents agreed that staff exit from employment because of stresses of overwork and work/ life imbalance. Specifically, 63(43.5%) staff and 4(57.1%) heads of departments agreed; and 60(41.4%) staff and 3(42.9%) heads of departments strongly agreed. However, 22(14.5%) respondents disagreed. Specifically, 16(11.0%) staff and none of the heads of departments disagreed; 17(11.7%) staff and none of the heads of departments strongly disagreed; 6(4.1%) staff and none of the heads of departments were undecided. On the overall, the picture presented by the results of this study indicates staff turnover in organizations happens because of stresses of overwork and work/ life imbalance. Stress from overwork and work/ life imbalance creates a mentally, emotionally and psychologically stressed employee (Tyson and Fell, 1986). According to the results of this study, stress from overwork causes turnover. This is because overwork denies the employee sufficient time for rest and also makes it difficult for the employee to meet his social and family requirements. At the end of it all, stress from overwork and work/life imbalance causes burnout, drains the employee and finally causes exit from the job.

Table 8: Loss of trust and confidence in leaders

Response	Staff	Rank	H.O.Ds	Rank
Strongly Disagree	10(6.9%)	4	3(42.9%)	1
Disagree	20(13.8%)	3	3(42.9%)	1
Undecided	3(2.2%)	5	0(0%)	4
Agree	56(38.6%)	1	1(14.3%)	3
Strongly Agree	56(38.6%)	2	0(0%)	4

A Spearman Rank Order Correlation (r) was calculated to ascertain if there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlation in the responses between staff and heads of departments. The following results were obtained:

$$r = 0.75 \pm 0.20; P.E._r = 0.132$$

The calculated value of r is greater than six times the probable error (P.E._r) hence the value of r is significantly ($p < 0.01$) different from zero correlation coefficient. Therefore, there were no statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) differences between responses by staff and those of the heads of departments. The findings of this study (Table 8) indicate that, majority, 112(73.7%) respondents agreed that staff exit from employment because of loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders. Specifically, 56(38.6%) staff and 1(14.3%) head of department agreed; and 56(38.6%) staff and none of the heads of departments strongly agreed. However, 40(26.3%) respondents disagreed. Specifically, 20(13.8%) staff and 3(42.9%) heads of departments disagreed; 10(6.9%) staff and 3(42.9%) heads of departments strongly disagreed; 3(2.2%) staff and none of the heads of departments were undecided. On the overall, the picture presented by the results of this study indicates staff turnover in organizations happens because of loss of

trust and confidence in senior leaders. How senior employees in an organization behave or handle work related issues can affect the life of employees in that organization (Armstrong and Baron, 1998). According to the results of this study, once other staff lose confidence and trust in the senior leaders, they also lose trust in the organization thus look for opportunities elsewhere. Senior leaders are usually seen as the key pillars of the organization. Once

they mishandle issues to the extent that they disappoint other employees, the next thing that the disappointed employees do is to quit the job or seek for transfer to other places. Continued mismanagement of the affairs of the organization certainly leads to high staff turnover.

Table 9: Poor relationship with colleagues

Response	Staff	Rank	H.O.Ds	Rank
Strongly Disagree	7(4.8%)	5	0(0%)	3
Disagree	13(9.0%)	3	0(0%)	3
Undecided	5(3.4%)	5	0(0%)	3
Agree	63(43.4%)	1	3(42.9%)	2
Strongly Agree	57(3.4%)	2	4(57.1%)	1

A Spearman Rank Order Correlation (r) was calculated to ascertain if there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlation in the responses between staff and heads of departments. The following results were obtained:

$$r = 0.75 \pm 0.20; P.E._r = 0.132$$

The calculated value of r is greater than six times the probable error (P.E._r) hence the value of r is significantly ($p < 0.01$) different from zero correlation coefficient. Therefore, there were no statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) differences between responses by staff and those of the heads of departments. The findings of this study (Table 9) indicate that, majority, 120(78.9%) respondents agreed that staff exit from employment because of poor relationships between employees. Specifically, 63(43.4%) staff and 3(42.9%) heads of departments agreed; and 57(3.4%) staff and 4(57.1%) heads of departments strongly agreed. However, 32(21.1%) respondents disagreed. Specifically, 13(9.0%) staff and none of the heads of departments disagreed; 7(4.8%) staff and none of the heads of departments strongly disagreed; 5(3.4%) staff and none of the heads of departments were undecided. On the overall, the picture presented by the results of this study indicates staff turnover in organizations happens because of poor relationships between employees. One's workplace is usually considered as a second home. Therefore the relationship between an employee and others in the organization is critical (Spector, 2008). According to the findings of this study, poor relationships among staff cause staff turnover. When staff relationships are strained, they cause discomfort to members and make the workplace not enjoyable. Staff will always seek for reasons to be away and in the course look for alternative places. In fact, in cases where they do not get alternative jobs, they ask to be transferred to other departments which may be considered to be friendlier.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

Thus, dissatisfaction with conditions of work; insufficient career development opportunities at place of work; Bullying and harassment at place of work; the job or workplace not living to the employees' expectations; Mismatch between the person and the job; Employees feeling devalued and unrecognized; Stresses from overwork and work/ life imbalance; Loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders; and Poor relationship with colleagues are some of the causes of staff turnover at MMUST. The study recommends that the University should improve on mechanisms of addressing causes of staff turnover to improve on staff retention. Such mechanisms could include management having regular meetings with employees or encouraging meetings with employees' representatives and having the outcomes of those meetings communicated for action to be taken to address the issues raised.

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