# ACADEMIC STAFF RETENTION AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

## THE IMPACT OF INCENTIVES


**By**

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# Abstract

This thesis examines the drivers of staff retention at Omani higher education institutions (HEIs), an important issue for any organisation wishing to function well and one of specific policy interest in Oman, where staff retention in the higher education context is under-researched. The topic choice was informed by the author's experience as a civil servant in the Ministry of Higher Education in the Sultanate of Oman. The study pays particular attention to the role of incentives in staff retention as this is a domain over which policy-makers have some control, at least in principle.

Oman is an interesting case to study as the education system has developed rapidly from a low base over the last five decades, relying substantially on foreign expertise, but with an increasing interest in developing and appointing local talent. The extant theoretical and empirical literature on staff retention has emerged from research in Western high-income contexts, such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Whilst there is also some work on staff retention in low-income contexts, particularly in Africa, there is a lack of research on the high-income non-Western context of the Middle Eastern Arab Gulf states - a lacuna this study aims to fill, drawing on the case of Oman.

The theoretical framework for this study is based on three theories. The first is the two-factor theory (Herzberg, 1959, 1966), which was helpful in extracting the independent variables for the study and for understanding and interpreting the findings. The other theories that played a key role in helping to understand and interpret the findings were equity theory (Adams, 1965) and expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964).

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, with both quantitative and qualitative methods used to gather the data. A questionnaire survey was administered via a convenience sampling technique to academic staff at public and private HEIs in Oman. This yielded an effective sample of 317 respondents. The questionnaire combined modules on personal background, work context, work experiences, attitudes, and aspirations. The data were used to compare groups within the sample, particularly those intending to stay in their work and those intending to leave.

The quantitative survey was followed by semi-structured interviews with academic staff. Employing non-probability sampling techniques with the survey respondents, 16 academic staff members were selected to be interviewed. The selection criteria considered including

academic staff with different demographic characteristics to ensure effective comparisons could be made between the different groups of the sample and to enrich the study with a broader range of perspectives.

Overall, the results of this work suggest that financial and non-financial incentives both play important roles in the retention of academic staff. There is no single recipe for staff retention, suggesting that a combination of both types of incentives is beneficial. The study concludes that better communication with academic staff to explore their expectations and perceptions and to develop an effective retention strategy could save higher education institutions time and effort resulting from the loss of qualified academic staff and the need to replace them with new personnel. Moreover, ensuring there is equity between Omani and non-Omani academics when providing incentives could prove to be more important for retaining staff than the incentives themselves.

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# Acknowledgements

A doctoral journey is not only a thesis and a scientific degree. The vast experience I have gained by studying the fundamentals of scientific research, as well as by living in beautiful Glasgow and dealing with people from nearby and from all over the world, has greatly changed my personality and my perceptions of things. I have come to believe that a person who emerges with just a certificate and no other benefits after such a long and arduous journey is the biggest loser. A doctoral journey teaches people a great deal besides what they learn from the project itself.

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I am grateful to everyone who has contributed to the success of this study and to everyone who has helped me or played a role, whether big or small, or was present in my life and supported me during my studies. Without you, I wouldn't have reached this stage. Thank you!

Amal Al-Qarshoubi

Glasgow, 2020

# Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Name: Amal Al-Qarshoubi

Signature:

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Research Purpose and Significance

Reviewing the existing literature, it appears that thus far there has been no attempt to divide the factors affecting academic staff retention into financial and non-financial incentives (see page 52 in Chapter 3). This study undertakes that task with the purpose of identifying which incentive type has greater influence on academic staff retention. It has also been noticed that previous studies have focused solely on either public higher education institutions or on private higher education institution (HEIs); the literature appears lacking any comparisons between public and private HEIs and the incentives affecting academic staff retention at each. Also, there is a need to understand the academics' viewpoints and what they look for when they decide or wish to move to another institution. In addition, it would prove insightful to investigate whether the needs and concerns of Omani academic staff members and non-Omani academic staff members are similar or different. It is very important for policy-makers in Oman to understand the similarities and differences between Omani and non-Omani academics.

The main objective of this study is to explore the incentives that impact the retention of academic staff members working at Omani public and private HEIs. Another objective is to investigate the factors leading to the resignation of academic staff and whether they are the same as those influencing staff retention. This study also investigates which type of incentives (financial or non-financial) has a greater influence on retention. The final objective is to examine whether the incentives influencing academic staff retention at public HEIs differ from those affecting the retention of academics working at private HEIs, and if there is any difference in the drivers of retention between Omani and non-Omani academic staff.

To fulfil the objectives of this study, the following research questions will be addressed:

1) What are the financial and non-financial incentives that impact academic staff retention at higher education institutions in Oman?

2) What are the factors leading to academic staff members' resignations at higher education institutions in Oman?

3) Which incentive type (financial or non-financial) has a greater effect on retention?

4) How do characteristics such as institution type (public or private) and nationality (Omani or non-Omani) impact retention?

Reviewing the existing literature, it can be seen that while studies have been conducted in the contexts of Western and African countries, academic studies on the retention of academic staff at HEIs in the Middle East appear to be lacking. This is important because what is applicable to Western and African cases might not be applicable to the Middle Eastern context in general or to the Omani context in particular. Therefore, the motivation for this study is to explore the determinants of academic staff retention in Oman. What makes this study significant and unique is that it aims to address the current lack of research on the roles of various incentives aimed at retaining academic staff in the Middle East and especially in Oman.

Academic staff retention is a global issue affecting both developed and developing countries (Tettey, 2006; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Ng'ethe, 2013); but in Middle Eastern countries, it has been under-investigated in the academic literature. As one of the Arab Gulf countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates), Oman is not exempt from concerns about the retention of academic staff, especially Omani-born academics. Therefore, research is required to understand the needs of the academic staff and to create a smart strategy to retain them. Hence, the idea for this study arose from the need to help understand the concerns and requirements of academics in Oman.

## 1.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on three theories. The independent variables were extracted from two-factor theory (Herzberg, 1959, 1966), and the theories that helped in understanding and interpreting the findings were two-factor theory (Herzberg, 1959, 1966), equity theory (Adams, 1965), and expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964).

The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.1. The independent variables are the financial and non-financial incentives, and the dependent variable is academic staff retention. The impact of nationality (Omani or non-Omani) and HEI type (private or public) on retention is examined directly (as independent variables) and indirectly (as moderators).

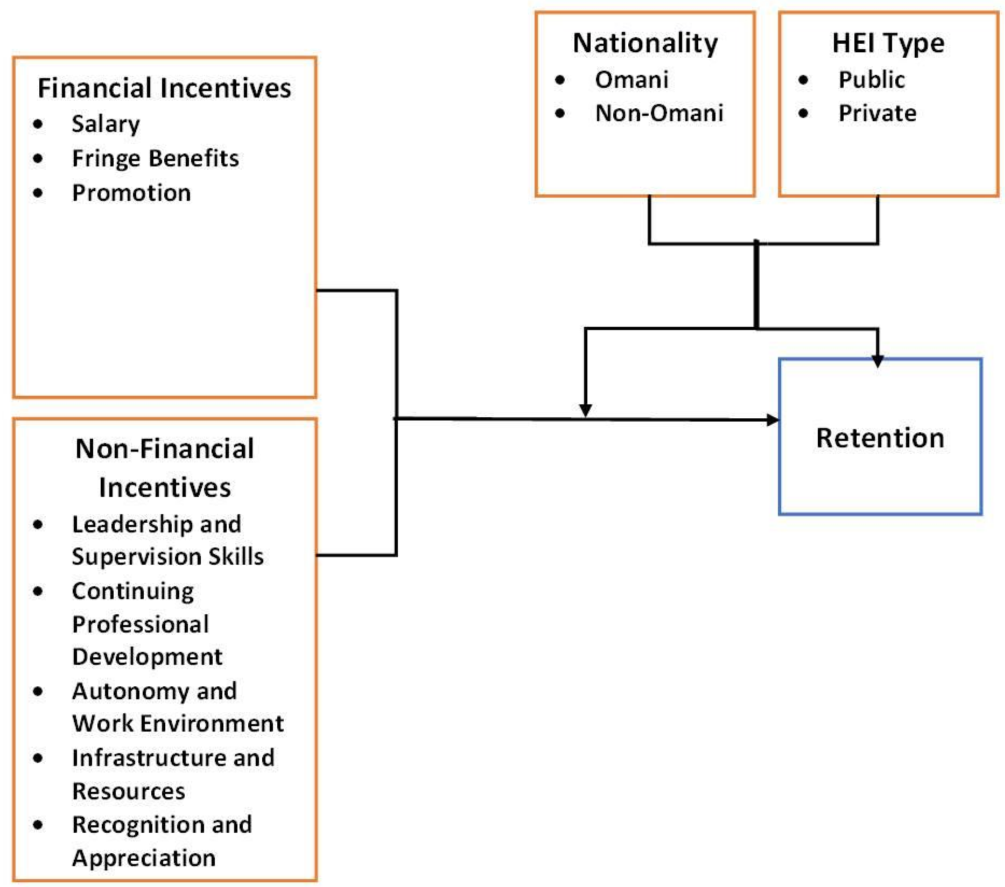


**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework**

## 1.3 Research Methods

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to gather the necessary data to address the research questions. An online survey was used to collect information from the largest possible sample of academic staff members. A total of 317 survey responses from 27 Omani public and private HEIs were considered. Next, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted to enrich the study by providing a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and their perspectives on the incentives impacting their desires and decisions to remain in or leave their current institutions. The interview participants were selected based on their survey responses; those willing to participate in interviews provided their names and contact details at the end of the survey. Ultimately, 16 interviews were conducted with academic staff members: eight from public HEIs and eight from private HEIs.

## 1.4 Positionality

This study is concerned with investigating the impact of incentives on the retention of academic staff working in higher education institutions. The researcher has been working for Oman's Ministry of Higher Education for 15 years. The vision of the ministry is to ensure quality higher education that meets the requirements for sustainable development. In order to realise that vision, the ministry's mission is to help the higher education system keep pace with the developments and changes in today's world so that it can meet the requirements of sustainable development in the information age. To fulfil its vision and mission, the ministry has set several key objectives, including increasing the efficiency of Omani HEIs in order to achieve high quality standards and enhancing areas of research in Omani HEIs. The researcher, as a member of this ministry, is interested in contributing to enhancing the quality of the country's HEIs and the knowledge provided to the students by retaining qualified academic staff members.

The researcher's position in the ministry facilitated the distribution of the questionnaire to the largest possible number of public and private HEIs, especially those institutions that are under the supervision of the ministry. The concerned directorates sent the questionnaire to the institutions under their supervision. The participation of the institutions and their academic staff was on a voluntary basis and the participants were informed that their participation would not affect their jobs. Furthermore, they were assured that the data would remain confidential and that anonymity would be maintained. Also, as the nature of the researcher's job does not require direct contact with academic staff, most of the participants did not know where the researcher worked, since all of the emails and WhatsApp messages used during the data gathering period emphasised only that I was a researcher. Moreover, the interviewees consisted of volunteers who had provided their names and contact details at the end of the survey, and the criteria for the selection were designed to ensure as broad a range of perspectives as possible by interviewing academic staff members with different demographic characteristics. Hence, it can be said that the position of the researcher facilitated the data gathering, and the researcher's familiarity with the place, research context, and higher education system in Oman added value to the study.

## 1.5 Structure of the Study

This last section of the chapter will outline the study's structure.

This introduction chapter has provided an overview of the study, starting with the research purpose and significance, followed by the research questions, an overview of the theoretical and conceptual framework, the position of the researcher, and finally, the structure of the study.

The next chapter provides a general overview of the Sultanate of Oman, focusing on the country's education, and particularly its higher education, including its history and development. Finally, the history of the problem of academic staff retention in Oman is discussed, in addition to the importance of academic staff retention to the country.

Chapter 3 reviews the available literature on staff retention and its importance. Next, the concept and types of incentives are presented, followed by the theoretical framework for this study. Finally, the research gaps are highlighted.

Chapter 4 presents the purpose of the study and the research questions, followed by an explanation of the conceptual framework that was built through the literature review. Next, the research methodology and research design are discussed. The sampling design and data gathering instruments are all detailed in this chapter.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, respectively. The methods used for data analysis are described and the results are presented in detail. Chapter 7 discusses the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses and uses them to address the research questions within the context of the supporting literature.

Finally, a conclusion is provided in Chapter 8, which highlights the contributions of this study and makes recommendations for policies, followed by a consideration of the study’s limitations and suggestions for further research.

# Chapter 2: Oman and the Research Context

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents contextual information about the Sultanate of Oman and its higher education system. It will provide a general overview of Oman, including the country's history, geography, demography, political system, economy, and policy of Omanisation. It will then give an overview of Oman's education system, including the history of its higher education, its development and its expansion. Finally, the history of Oman's academic staff retention problem will be presented.

## 2.2 General Overview of Oman

This section will present information about Oman's history, geography, demography, political system, economy, and policy of Omanisation.

### 2.2.1 History

Oman has a long history extending back to ancient times, and it has been known by various names. During the time of the Sumerian civilisation, Oman was called Majan, which is a type of ship's hull; it was known for its shipbuilding, along with its copper mining. It also was famous for its frankincense, with many Sumerians and Egyptians travelling to Oman to purchase it; frankincense was used by Ancient Egyptians to mummify dead bodies. Later, Oman was known to the Persians as Mazoon, meaning a place of abundant water resources. It then became known as Oman. Although there is no consensus on the origin of its present name, it most likely refers to a place in Yemen from whence Omani tribes migrated after the collapse of the Marib Dam in the 6$^{th}$ century (Ministry of Information, 2016, pp.38-39).

From the 13$^{th}$ to 18$^{th}$ centuries, Oman had a powerful empire extending from southern Persia to include the Gulf coasts and the Indian coast, and reaching as far as southern Mozambique in East Africa (see Figure 2.1). During that period, specifically in 1507, large sections of the Omani coastline were occupied by the Portuguese, but resistance from the

Omanis prevented them from taking control of the interior. The Portuguese occupation lasted just over 140 years. It was in 1650 that the Omanis finally liberated Oman, but they remained involved in the struggle to end European encroachment throughout the Gulf region, all the way to the Indian and East African coasts, a struggle which continued until the European presence in those areas had finally ended (Ministry of Information, 2016, pp.42-44).


**Figure 2.1: The Omani Empire from the 13th to the 18th Centuries (fandom.com)**

In 1744, a new era started in the country's history when Imam Ahmed bin Said, who was the Wali of Sohar, became the ruler of Oman. That was the beginning of the House of Al Busaid's rule of Oman, which has extended for more than 270 years, right up to the present day. The continuous leadership of the Al Busaid family has played a significant role in reviving the power of the Omani Empire, extending its borders again to comprise large parts of East Africa during the first half of the 19th century. During the reign of Al Busaid, Oman has made many achievements, such as the establishment of its first central government, the establishment of a strong armed force, the development of its naval fleet, the maintenance of its commercial trading position and the emergence of the Port of Muscat as one of the world’s most important ports, and the enhancement of political relations with major global powers like Britain, France and the United States (Ministry of Information, 2016, pp.44-45).

A turning point in Oman’s history came on 23rd July 1970. This was the day that the seventh Sultan of the Al Busaid family, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, took power, initiating the modern renaissance of Oman. For Oman’s new ruler, nation-building was the key priority, and the country has undergone radical changes in several areas. These advances have involved the nation’s infrastructure, education, health, economy, peace and stability, and good relations with neighbouring countries and the rest of the world. On 9th August 1970, Oman’s name was officially changed to the Sultanate of Oman (Ministry of Information, 2016, pp.50-52).

### 2.2.2 Geography

The Sultanate of Oman is a Middle Eastern country, located in the south-eastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. It is the second largest country on the Arabian Peninsula after Saudi Arabia, with an area of 309,500 square kilometres. Oman is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which was founded in 1981 with the objective of strengthening relations and cooperation between the GCC countries. The GCC comprises six countries: the Sultanate of Oman, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, and the State of Qatar. Oman shares borders with Saudi Arabia to the west, the UAE to the northwest, and Yemen to the southwest. It has a coastline of 3,165 kilometres that borders the Strait of Hormuz in the north, the Sea of Oman (or Gulf of Oman, as it was called previously) to the northeast, and the Arabian Sea to the southeast. Oman is divided into eleven governorates: Muscat (the capital), Dhofar, Musandam, Al Buraymi, Al Dakhliyah, Al Batinah North, Al Batinah South, Al Sharqiyah North, Al Sharqiyah South, Al Dhahira, and Al Wusta. Each of these governorates has its own administration and comprises a number of *wilayats*, or districts

(Ministry of Information, 2016, pp.12-19). Figure 2.2 shows a map of Oman and its governorates and borders.

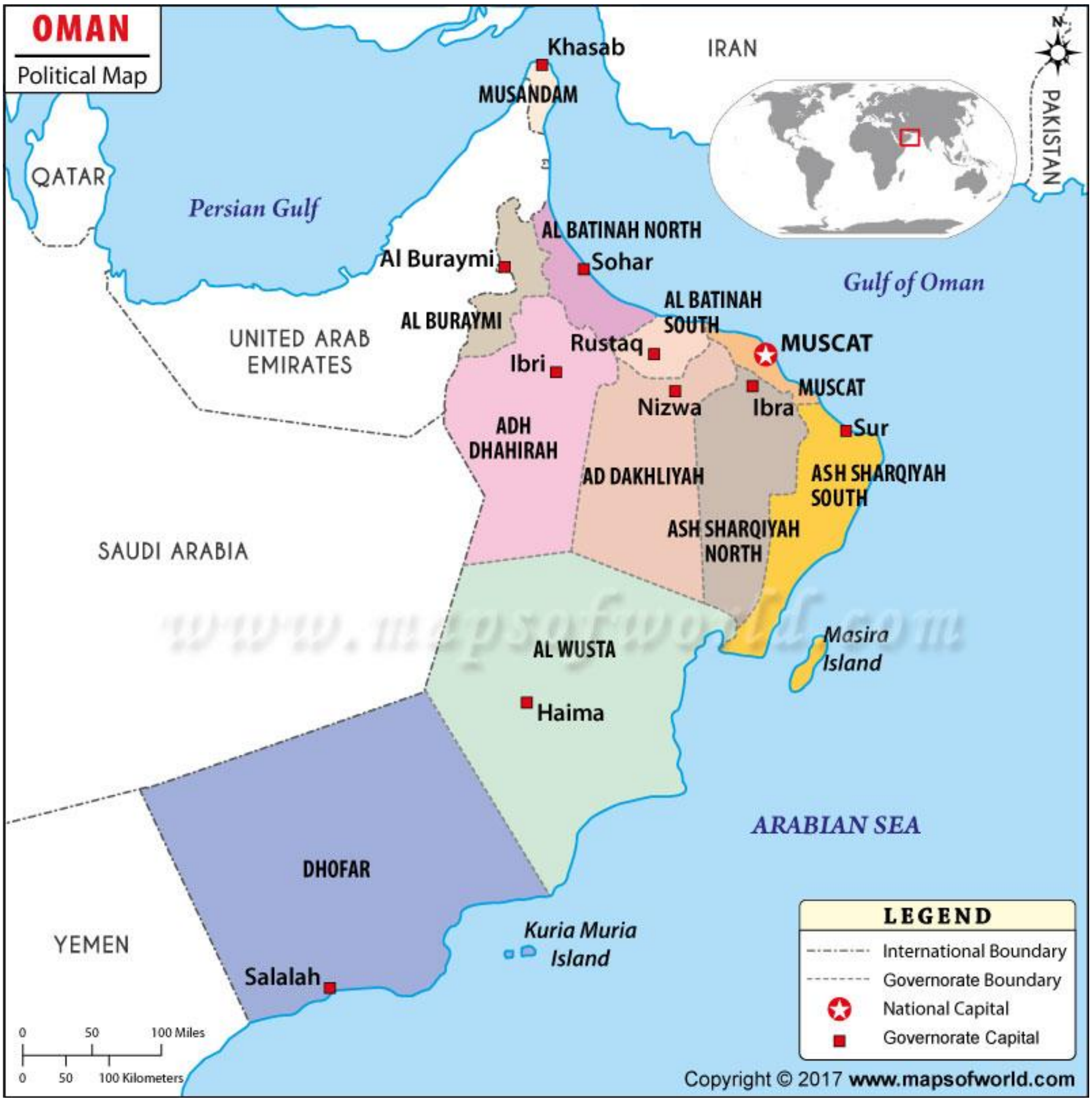


**Figure 2.2: Map of Oman**

**(mapsofworld.com)**

### 2.2.3 Demography

Oman has a small population compared with other Middle Eastern countries. According to the latest census data, published by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) in November 2019, the total population is 4,673,024; Omanis (2,685,559) constitute 57% of the population, with expatriates (1,987,465) making up the remaining 43% (NCSI, 2019, p.2). Most of the population are young. Arabic is the official language of Oman and the medium of instruction in pre-tertiary education, especially in public schools (whereas private schools often use English). English is widely spoken and can be considered the second language as it is the medium of instruction in most tertiary education programmes. There are also other languages that are spoken by some Omanis, such as Jabali, Mahri, Swahili, Balochi, and Urdu (Al-Ghatrifi, 2016, p.26). The official religion in Oman has been Islam since the Prophet Mohammed's lifetime, but there are also small numbers of Christians and Hindus. Oman is known for its religious tolerance, which led to the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs changing its name to the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs in 1997 (Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, 2017).

### 2.2.4 Political System

Oman, like many other countries, has a constitution; it is called "the Basic Statute of the State" or "the Basic Law of the State" and was issued by Royal Decree No. 101/96 in 1996. The Basic Statute is the source of all royal decrees and laws in Oman. It clearly states the system of the state and the principles of its policies, and it guarantees citizens' freedoms and rights. According to the Basic Statute, 'The Sultanate of Oman is … an independent state with full sovereignty … The religion of the State is Islam and Islamic Sharia is the basis for legislation … The system of governance is Sultani [Royal], hereditary in the male descendants of Sayyid Turki bin Said bin Sultan' (Ministry of Legal Affairs, 1996, p.3).

Oman and Brunei are the only two existing countries in the world with a Sultanate system, in which the Sultan has sovereign power. In Oman, the Sultan is the head of the state and government. In addition, His Majesty is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, head of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister), and leader of the most critical ministries: Defence, Foreign Affairs and Finance (Al'Abri, 2015, p.13). However, Oman derives its legislation from Islamic principles, as was mentioned previously, and the *Shura* (consultation) is one of its components. Therefore, Oman introduced democratic principles through the establishment of the *Majlis al-Shura*, or Consultative Council, in the early 1990s. The members of the Majlis are elected by Omanis to represent each of Oman's wilayats (Lynn, 1999; Funsch, 2015). It is worth mentioning here that the Majlis al-Shura's influence on the decision-making process in Oman has increased since the events of the Arab Spring in 2011 (Worrall, 2012).

Oman has a parliament called *Majlis Oman*, or the Council of Oman. It includes *Majlis al-Dawla* (the State Council) and *Majlis al-Shura* (the Consultation Council). The Majlis al-Dawla's main role is to offer proposals and solutions to deal with the issues facing the state and its citizens. Its members are appointed by His Majesty by royal decree and they are selected based on their qualifications, knowledge, and experience. The second council, the Majlis al-Shura, functions as a link between the people and the government, and its members are directly elected by Omanis themselves, as was mentioned previously (Al'Abri, 2015, p.14; Ministry of Information, 2016, pp.114-126).

At the international level, Oman's policy has been clear since the beginning of the reign of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the builder of Oman's modern renaissance. The bases for Oman's foreign policy are maintaining good relations with neighbouring countries, strengthening relations with Arab countries, and establishing friendly relations with countries all over the world without interfering in the internal affairs of any other states (Ministry of Information, 2016, p.52). Oman is known for its persistent efforts to preserve peace in the GCC and Arab region and to bridge the gaps between nations. Oman's successful role in brokering the (now-defunct) agreement between Iran and the United States regarding nuclear weapons is good proof of that. Its focus now is on finding solutions for the Yemeni and Syrian crises (Ministry of Information, 2016, pp.60-63).

### 2.2.5 Economy

Oman can be considered a high-income state which depends mainly on oil and gas as its sources of income. According to statistics from 2018, 78.2% of national revenues came from oil and gas. Agriculture, fishing, mining, and tourism are other main sources of income (NCSI, 2019), but their contributions to the economy are relatively low compared to oil and gas. His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has realised the danger of relying on finite resources and has subsequently issued directives to formulate a new strategy for Oman's economy for the period 1996-2020. 'Oil is a finite resource and its time is limited. Therefore, it is essential not to depend on it solely to finance development,' His Majesty stressed in a speech in 1995 (Ministry of National Economy, 2008, p.99). This strategy has been known as "Vision for Oman's Economy – 2020", or simply as "Oman 2020".

Achieving economic balance and sustainable growth through human resource development, economic diversification, and private sector development were the main goals of Oman 2020. Among the major challenges facing the government in its effort to achieve economic balance and sustainable growth are the following:

- the low level of Omanis' participation in the labour market and the growth of expatriate labour;
- the poor productivity of human resources and their insignificant participation in the national economy;
- the inability of the national labour force to cope with rapid developments, especially in the field of technology (Ministry of National Economy, 2008, p.45).

Therefore, the strategy has focused primarily on the development of human resources as one of its most significant dimensions. According to the strategy, 'The achievement of future development will depend, to a large extent, on success in implementing the human resources development policies' (Ministry of National Economy, 2008, p.54). Therefore, the policies and mechanisms designed for the purpose of human resources development are primarily focused on providing all stages and kinds of education (school education, technical education and vocational training, and university and post-graduate education) (Ministry of National Economy, 2008, p.54).

### 2.2.6 Policy of Omanisation

Omanisation is a national policy that aims to reduce the country's dependence on expatriate manpower and replace it with national manpower. The policy has been in place since 1988 (Das and Gokhale, 2010) and it is under the supervision of the Ministry of Manpower. Oman 2020 emphasised the importance of the Omanisation policy in both the private and public sectors. The government has made significant progress in Omanising jobs in the public sector. In 2018, the percentage of public sector jobs occupied by Omanis was 85% (NCSI, 2019). On the other hand, the private sector suffers from a low percentage of Omanisation (just 15% in 2018) (NCSI, 2019).

As an Omani researcher who has adequate knowledge of the Omani labour market, I would argue that the reasons for the lack of Omanis working in the private sector can be summarised in several points. First, there is a lack of confidence in the ability of the workforce to hold senior positions, and as a result, private organisations prefer to employ expatriates in those critical positions. This situation does not satisfy well-qualified Omanis, who believe in their own abilities to hold such positions and lead the country's companies to success. It should be mentioned that Omanis who have held leadership positions in the private sector have demonstrated their capabilities trustworthiness. Together with the low wages, occasional delays in paying salaries, and the long working hours in most private organisations, this is why Omanis tend to prefer working in the public sector rather than for private companies. In addition, many Omanis prefer to work in oil companies and *large* well-known private companies because the salaries, working hours and working conditions are much better.

## 2.3 Education

Since the first day of Oman's modern renaissance in July 1970, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has believed that building a prosperous future for Oman cannot be achieved without cooperation between the government and the people. Indeed, His Majesty has insisted on that point in most of his speeches. In order to create a qualified population capable of accomplishing this task, it was necessary to focus on education, which is what the Sultan has done. He realised the importance of education in building a modern Oman and famously emphasised that every Omani should learn even if it has to be under the shade of trees:

> Education was my great concern, and I saw that it was necessary to direct efforts to spread education. We have given the Ministry of Education the opportunity and supplied it with capabilities to break the chains of ignorance. Schools have been opened regardless of the cost; the important thing is that there should be education, even under the shade of trees.
>
> (Qaboos bin Said, 18th November 1972, Ministry of Information, 2015, p.19)

The number of schools and pupils has increased over the years. In 1970, there were only three schools in the whole Sultanate: two in Muscat and one in Salalah, for a total number of 900 pupils (Ministry of Information, 2015, p.20). Education was exclusive to males.

However, since that time, the education system has developed very rapidly and undergone major changes (Al'Abri, 2015, p.1). Education has been made available to all Omanis of both genders (Al-Lamki, 2006, p.56). In 1971, there were 16 schools and 7,000 pupils, and in 1972, there were 45 schools and 15,000 pupils (Ministry of Information, 2015, p.20). By 2018, Oman had 1,927 schools, for 805,329 pupils. The number of schools mentioned for 2018 includes public, private, international, and special needs schools (NCSI, 2019, p.38).

## 2.4 Higher Education

This section will focus on the emergence, development, and expansion of public and private higher education in Oman.

The Sultanate of Oman is one of the Arab countries that has witnessed the most rapid rate of change within a fast-growing higher education (HE) sector. This has occurred through a number of stages, with the aim of providing Omani employees with suitable qualifications in order to allow them to replace expatriate employees (Baporikar and Shah, 2012, p.10).

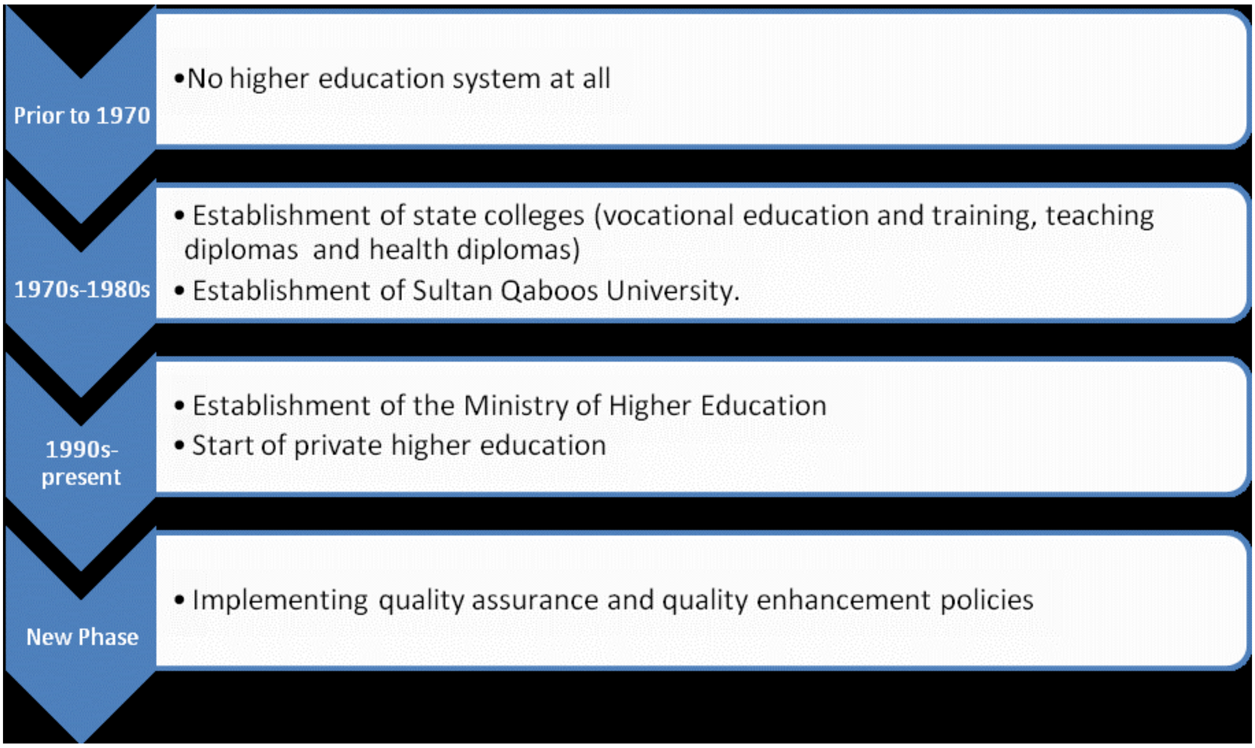


**Figure 2.3: Development Phases of Higher Education in Oman**

**(Source: Al'Abri, 2015, p.18)**

The Omani higher education system is considered a new system as there was no formal higher education before the 1980s. After His Majesty identified school education as a cornerstone and the country witnessed the building of many schools in different regions in Oman, the establishment of the higher education system began in the early 1980s. The higher education system in Oman has gone through rapid development both quantitatively and qualitatively (Al'Abri, 2015). Figure 2.3 summarises the history of higher education in Oman in four phases; the figure was created by Al'Abri (2015, p.18), adapted from Baporikar and Shah (2012).

The rapid development that Oman's higher education has undergone can be summarised in the following points (Alyahmadi, 2007; Baporikar and Shah, 2012; Al'Abri, 2015; Ministry of Higher Education, 2018):

- Before the 1970s, there was no higher education system in Oman at all.
- As the government realised the importance of higher education in building a modern Oman, starting from the 1970s, when students finished their secondary education, they were granted scholarships to study abroad and obtain university degrees. These students completed their studies abroad, before returning to Oman and playing a key role in the rehabilitation of the country and in training other Omanis.
- HEIs began to emerge in the early '80s with the establishment of the Omani Banking Institute in 1983, the function of which was to qualify Omanis to work in the banking sector. This was followed by the establishment of intermediate colleges for teachers in 1984, which prepare students to become schoolteachers. In the same year, industrial technical colleges were founded to meet local market needs relating to various professional disciplines. In addition, health science institutes were established to prepare Omani nurses to work in government hospitals, and centres of vocational training were launched to prepare the Omani youth to occupy various vocational jobs. All of these institutions granted higher degree diplomas.
- The educational development process culminated in 1986 with the opening of the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), the biggest public university in Oman up to the present day. The university started with five colleges: Education, Engineering, Science, Medicine, and Agriculture. Today, it includes four additional colleges: Arts and Social Sciences, Economics and Political Sciences, Law, and Nursing. The founding of this university has made a great difference to the development of higher

education in Oman and it has played a critical role in providing the labour market with highly qualified Omani youth. It is also worth noting that the SQU was the first HEI in Oman to grant bachelor’s degrees, another important contribution to the development of the nation’s higher education. Given the institution’s fundamental role, it merits listing as a separate point rather than being included in the previous point addressing the same period (the 1980s).

- In 1994, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) was established by Royal Decree No. 2/94 to take over the implementation of plans and programmes in the educational and scientific fields through higher education institutions under its supervision, in addition to taking responsibility for foreign scholarships.

- In the 1990s, the six intermediate colleges for teachers became colleges of education and started granting bachelor’s degrees. Also, the Industrial Technical College became the Higher College of Technology, and the Omani Banking Institute became the College of Banking and Financial Studies and began granting bachelor’s degrees. The five institutes of vocational training were also converted into intermediate colleges and started granting diplomas.

- In the second half of the ’90s, a new era began in the development of higher education in Oman, as Royal Decree No. 68/96 opened the door for the private sector to contribute to the educational process. The decree encouraged the private sector to play a role in the development of education by establishing private universities and colleges under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education. As a result, nine private colleges were established in the second half of the 1990s.

  The emergence of private HEIs has come about as a result of reforms to the education systems in general and higher education in particular as the Omani government has made several efforts to expand primary and secondary education to accommodate the massive increase in population. These efforts have resulted in the development of education, but they have also resulted in the inability of public HEIs to accommodate the increasing numbers of high school graduates. Therefore, the Omani government has allowed the private sector to play an important role in the development of private higher education to accommodate the immense and growing demand for higher education. The measures taken by the government to support the private sector include subsidy schemes with provisions for loans at subsidised interest rates, and the allocation of land for the construction of private educational institutions (Al-Lamki, 2006, p.54).

In summary, the development and expansion of private higher education throughout the Sultanate of Oman began after the expansion of pre-university education, when it became available to all Omani citizens for free. This led to an increase in the number of high school graduates, which reduced their chances of being accepted by government HEIs (Al-Lamki, 2006, p.59).

- In the 2000s and 2010s, higher education witnessed many improvements, in both quantitative and qualitative terms. In terms of quantity, 19 private universities and colleges were established, taking the total number of private HEIs to 28. The colleges of education became colleges of applied sciences to fulfil the market requirements associated with different specialisations, such as information technology, international business administration, communication studies, and design. All of the health science institutes turned into colleges of health sciences and began granting bachelor's degrees.

  More policies were subsequently issued to regulate the higher education sector in Oman, such as the establishment of the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) by Royal Decree No. 54/2010. The establishment of the OAAA aimed to regulate the quality of higher education in Oman to guarantee a level that meets international standards and to encourage HEIs in Oman to provide international quality education. Thus, the main responsibilities of the OAAA include institutional and programme accreditation, in addition to the development and maintenance of the national qualifications framework. Subsequently, some HEIs have already been accredited by the OAAA, while others are still working towards gaining accreditation. Moreover, some HEI programmes have been granted international accreditation by well-known international authorities.

  The number of internal and external scholarships for undergraduate studies has increased considerably as a result of the royal commands of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said to meet the demands voiced by the people during the Arab Spring in 2011. More than 7,000 annual internal scholarships (previously around 2,200) and more than 1,500 annual external scholarships (previously around 160) had so far been approved at the time of this study. In addition, a postgraduate programme has been created in which students are sent to the most prestigious international universities for master's and doctorate degrees. There are 200 of these external postgraduate scholarships awarded annually, and all Omanis who meet the programme terms can apply regardless of their place of work, with the applications examined by a special committee.

From the above, it is clear that the educational sector in Oman has developed at a fast pace. In 1970, there were three primary schools in the country for fewer than 1,000 pupils, and no colleges or universities. Nowadays, there are 69 HEIs – 41 public and 28 private (see Table 2.1) – offering a wide range of programmes, including medicine, engineering, sciences, business, and many others. The total number of students enrolled in public and private HEIs in Oman and abroad in 2018 was 137,961 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2019). HEIs are under the supervision of various entities, like the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Manpower, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Health, other governmental entities, and private owners (Baporikar and Shah, 2012, p.9).

**Table 2.1: Public and Private HEIs in the Sultanate of Oman**

| | **Classification** | **Number of HEIs** |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Public University | 1 |
| **2** | Public College | 40 |
| **3** | Private University | 8 |
| **4** | Private University College | 3 |
| **5** | Private College | 17 |
| **Total** | | **69** |

**(Source: Higher Education Admission Centre, 2018)**

## 2.5 History of the Academic Staff Retention Problem

The retention of academic staff represents a concern for all HEIs that understand that their academic staff are the cornerstone of their success. Oman has invested a great deal of money and effort into establishing its HE system. Therefore, in order to maintain the success that has been achieved in the higher education sector, special attention should be paid to the academic staff working in Oman's HEIs. It is vital to focus on their needs and concerns in order to keep them for as long as possible, especially in light of the large-scale resignations of Omani academic staff that have been witnessed. This is problematic for several reasons: Oman is adopting a policy of Omanisation to increase the number of Omanis who work in different organisations, and the HE sector is not exempt from this. Therefore, more efforts should be made to prevent qualified Omani academics from leaving the sector. Another reason, also related to the objectives of Omanisation, is that it is important to retain qualified Omani and non-Omani academic staff members so as to educate and prepare the Omani youth to replace the expatriates currently occupying key positions and jobs; the resignation of such academics would have a negative influence on the quality of education provided to the students.

Concerns regarding academic staff retention grew in 2014, when the resignations that started in 2012 continued in noticeable numbers among the Omani academics at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), the largest public educational institution in Oman. Since that time, academic staff retention has become a major concern at different levels of Omani society. The Committee of Education and Scientific Research of the Shura Council discussed this problem at its meeting on 4th June 2014 (Alwatan Newspaper, 2014; Oman Daily Newspaper, 2014). In an attempt to identify the reasons behind the resignations, the Governing Council of the SQU formed a committee, which summarised the following perspectives expressed by the academics: academics were looking for better jobs and career paths that promised growth; there was a lack of appreciation of skills and achievements; promotion criteria was vague; there were difficulties and delays in promotion procedures; and there was a weak research environment (Albalad Newspaper, 2014; Alshabiba Newspaper, 2014; Oman Daily Newspaper, 2014). These reasons reported by the committee appointed by the SQU coincide, to some extent, with the reasons published in Al-Masar Newsletter in 2012. Al-Masar Newsletter, which is an Arabic language publication issued by SQU, reached its conclusions based on interviews with a group of academic and administrative staff members who had already resigned from the university.

Reviewing the literature relating to this problem, the researcher encountered no academic studies on the retention of academic staff at HEIs in Oman, the Arab Gulf, or the Middle East as a whole. In fact, even the aforementioned studies were simply reports or press reports that were published in different newspapers, rather than constituting academic studies. Therefore, it is necessary to take the initiative to explore the needs and concerns of

Omani and non-Omani academic staff members working in public and private HEIs by asking what incentives can impact their retention and what factors might lead to their resignation. It is also crucial to investigate whether there are differences between the perceptions of Omani and non-Omani academics regarding the incentives impacting their retention, and whether those incentives are similar or different in public and private HEIs.

## 2.6 Overview of Omani Employment-Related Laws

In Oman, the employment and pension laws for the private sector are different from those for the public sector. This section will first provide an overview of the aspects of the Omani Labour Law that are applicable to the private sector. This will be followed by an overview of the Civil Service Law and Bylaw that apply to the public sector. It should be noted that some higher education institutions have specific policies that provide better benefits and conditions than what is stipulated in the national laws outlined in this section.

***Laws Relating to Private Sector***

All business owners and workers are subject to the provisions of the Omani Labour Law, with the exception of certain specific categories that are excluded, such as members of the armed forces, public security bodies, and employees of the state's administrative apparatus and other arms of the government. The Labour Law applies to private higher education institutions, except with regard to the conditions for the appointment and promotion of academics, as the Ministry of Higher Education sets out special controls for the terms of appointment in addition to a bylaw for academic promotions. This section will present some of the employees' rights that are stipulated in the Labour Law issued by Royal Decree 35/2003 (Ministry of Manpower, 2012) and the Social Insurance Law issued by Royal Decree 72/91 (Public Authority for Social Insurance, 2019).

The Labour Law determines the minimum levels of benefits to which employees or workers are entitled. The fact that this only represents the minimum means that employers can provide more generous benefits to their employees than those stipulated by law. For instance, the Council of Ministers sets the minimum salary for employees based on their qualifications (e.g., diploma, bachelor's degree, etc.), class of occupation, or nature of their work. Subsequently, the Minister of Manpower issues decisions on the minimum salaries.

The Minister also issues a decision determining the minimum annual allowance and the procedures and conditions for its disbursement. Thus, private HEIs can pay much more attractive salaries to their academic staff members than those set by the Ministry of Manpower. In addition, employers are obliged to return non-Omani employees to their home countries at the end of their working relationship; this includes paying for employees' airfare.

Employees should not be engaged in work for more than nine hours per day, and for a maximum of 45 hours per week, with a break of at least half an hour for eating and resting. However, they might be employed in excess of the stipulated working hours if the work requires it, provided that the sum of the original and additional working hours does not exceed 12 hours a day. In such cases, the employer must grant the employee overtime pay and obtain written consent from the employee.

Under the Labour Law, employees are entitled to different types of leave. The minimum annual leave required by law is 30 days, although employers may grant more. Employees are also entitled to six days of emergency leave per year on full salary, to be used under any circumstances. Employees are entitled to salaried sick leave of no more than 10 weeks: the first and second weeks on full salary, the third and fourth weeks on three-quarters of their salary, the fifth and sixth weeks on half salary, and the seventh to tenth weeks on quarter salary. A medical certificate should be submitted as evidence of the sickness. Female employees are entitled to paid maternity leave of 50 days, but this can be taken no more than three times throughout their length of service with an employer.

In addition, the law stipulates that employers must provide their employees with workplace medical assistance. If the number of employees in one place exceeds 100, employers must appoint a nurse with medical aid experience and a doctor to treat them at a place prepared for this purpose. Moreover, employees must be provided with the necessary treatment and medication for free. If the number of employees increases to 500, the employer must, in addition to the above, provide all employees with the means of treatment free of charge. This includes any treatment that requires the assistance of doctors, specialists, or surgeons, as well as the necessary medication. The only medical costs exempted from this provision are those associated with dental treatment, glasses, and giving birth.

In addition, if an employee is treated in a government hospital or a private hospital, the employer must incur the costs of their treatment, medication, and hospital stay. This point might apply more to expatriate employees or workers than Omani employees, who, unlike expatriates, get free treatment in government hospitals. Therefore, some private businesses tend to insure only their expatriate staff, while others insure both their Omani and non-Omani employees.

The Social Insurance Law comprises two insurance branches: 1) Insurance against old-age, disability, and death; and 2) Insurance against work injuries and occupational diseases. The provisions of this law apply only to Omani employees who work in the private sector with permanent employment contracts. Thus, the provisions of this law do not apply to expatriate employees. Employees are entitled to a pension if their service ends with their reaching the age of 60 or above for male employees or 55 or above for female employees, and upon completing 20 years of service for males or 15 years for females. Employees are also eligible for a pension in the case of a debilitating injury or illness that a medical committee confirms prevents them from work. In the event of death, the employee's next of kin collects the pension.

When a work relationship ends, those employees (including expatriates) who are not covered by the provisions of the Insurance Law will be paid a reward for the period of their service, equivalent to a 15-day salary for every year of the first three years of service, a one-month salary for each additional year, and a percentage of a month's salary for the fraction of the final year they served. The last month's basic salary is taken as the basis for calculating the end-of-service reward. However, this remuneration is not due if the service period is less than one year.

***Laws Relating to Public Sector***

The provisions of the Civil Service Law and Bylaw apply to civil servants in the state's administrative apparatus, except for employees whose affairs are governed by other decrees, laws, or special contracts. As mentioned earlier in this section, although this law is used as the basis for the provisions of public sector organisations, some HEIs have their own bylaws that grant better benefits and conditions to their academic staff. This section will present some of the employees' rights stipulated in the Civil Service Law issued by Royal Decree 120/2004 (Ministry of Civil Service, 2007), the Civil Service Bylaw issued by a decision of the President of the Civil Service Council 9/2010 (Ministry of Civil Service, 2010), and the After-Service Pensions and Benefits Law for the Government's

Omani Employees issued by Royal Decree 26/86 (Civil Service Employees Pension Fund, 2017).

According to the Civil Service Law and Bylaw, an employee's conditions of employment shall be decided by a unit head if the job is permanent or by employment contracts if the job is temporary. The appointment decision determines the details of the salary to which the employee is entitled. Employees shall be entitled to the minimum salary determined for their grade. Upon appointment, employees may be granted a salary that exceeds the minimum if the period of their experience exceeds the period required to occupy that position. In such cases, the additional pay is added to the minimum salary based on each year of additional experience possessed by the employee.

Employees are also granted an annual allowance at the beginning of January each year, determined according to their financial grade and added to the last basic salary to which they are entitled. Along with their basic salary, employees at all financial grades are entitled to monthly allowances for housing, electricity, water, and transportation. A monthly phone allowance is paid to employees who occupy Grade 10 positions or higher (with Grade 1 being the highest position). If employees are not from the governorates in which their jobs are located or if they are non-Omanis, they may be provided with furnished housing.

In addition, non-Omani employees who occupy a grade 1-13 position are entitled to economy class airfare for themselves, their spouses, and three of their children who are not older than 21. If they occupy a lower grade than 13, they are entitled to solo airfare. This airfare should allow them to travel from their country of residence to Oman and back again. Alternatively, when requested, employees may be granted a cash compensation estimated at 75% of the value of the airfare. This is also applicable to employees holding grade 13 positions and higher when they travel for leave once a year, and every two years for those holding positions at lower grades. Non-Omani employees are also entitled to compensation if their work requires them not to take their annual leave. Academic staff members are always located at the top of the grade scale, and some institutions grant business class tickets to academic staff at the highest grades.

The Council of Ministers determines the number of official working hours per week in accordance with the requirements of the public interest. A decision is issued by the President of the Civil Service Council regarding the start and end times of work in light of the number of official working hours determined by the Council of Ministers. After referring to the Council of Ministers, the unit head determines the official working hours that are appropriate for the particular nature of the work of his/her unit. However, the start and end times for the working day at public HEIs are determined by each institution's president or by the responsible minister if the institutions are under the supervision of a ministry, in light of the number of official working hours determined by the Council of Ministers.

Employees are entitled to fully paid annual leave consisting of 48 days for those at grades 10 or higher, 38 days for grades 11-13, and 28 days for the remaining grades. In some public HEIs, academic staff are granted 60 days of annual leave. Annual leave for the academic staff at HEIs and school teachers should be taken during the HEI and school vacations. The start and end dates for all leave are determined by the decision of the relevant minister or president. In the event of illness, an employee is entitled to fully paid sick leave for a period not exceeding seven days at a time. In the event of illness requiring an employee be granted leave for a period exceeding seven days, the following limits are applied: six months on full salary, and the following six months on three-quarters of their salary and with full allowances. This type of sick leave can be taken every five years, calculated from the date of the first sick leave of more than seven days. If the sick leave results from a work injury, it is granted with full salary and without being restricted to a five-year period.

Employees are entitled to other types of leave, such as paid emergency leave of five days in addition to another five days for reasons outside of their control as determined by the unit head. Female employees are entitled to maternity leave of 50 days on full salary, to be taken no more than five times throughout their period of service. Female employees can be also granted special leave without pay for a period not exceeding one year to take care of their children; for this leave to be granted, employees must apply within one year of their maternity leave expiring; this provision is not applicable to women on temporary contracts.

Employees may be granted leave on full salary for a period of 15 days to accompany a patient for treatment outside the Sultanate. This leave may also be granted to accompany a patient for treatment inside the Sultanate if the competent medical authorities decide it is necessary; if the treatment exceeds the expected period, the unit head may extend the leave for a period not exceeding 30 more days. The aforementioned leave is not guaranteed to employees on a temporary contract. According to the discretion of unit heads, employees may be granted leave without pay upon request for a maximum period of four years throughout their period of service.

Non-Omani employees and their family members who reside with them enjoy free medical treatment and services in government hospitals and centres. As, in all cases, Omani citizens enjoy free treatment and services in government hospitals and centres, there is no need to stipulate the treatment of Omani employees in the Civil Service Law and Bylaw.

The provisions of the After-Service Pensions and Benefits Law apply to all permanent employees working in the state’s administrative apparatus, except for those covered by other laws and decrees relating to pensions or after-service benefits. These (Omani) employees are entitled to a pension if their service ends when they reach the retirement age of 60, upon their resignation provided that they have reached the age of 50 and their period of service is not less than 15 years, or not less than 20 years if aged below 50, or due to death or poor health as determined by the medical authority, regardless of their period of service.

Employees (including non-Omani employees) who are not entitled to a pension upon leaving service are still entitled to an end-of-service reward, provided that their service period is not less than a full year. Employees are entitled to an end-of-service reward of one month’s salary for each year of their service to a maximum of OMR 12,000 (approximately £24,000), as calculated based on the last basic salary they receive. A fraction of a month reaching 15 days or more is considered a full month. Employees are not entitled to this reward if their service is less than one year.

Comparing the basic employment and pensions laws, a difference can be seen between employees’ rights in the public and private sectors in terms of holidays and end-of-service rewards and pensions. Despite most of the rights being the same for Omani and non-Omani employees, there are a few disparities. For example, not all Omani employees are entitled to receive annual airfare, unlike their expatriate counterparts. In addition, non-Omani employees are not entitled to a pension, although they still receive an end-of-service reward. Work conditions and employment rights might have an impact on employees’ retention, an issue that will be examined later on in the thesis during the analysis and discussion of the survey and interview results.

## 2.7 Summary

The data required for this study are gathered from Omani public and private higher education institutions. Therefore, it was necessary to provide an overview of Oman and its education system to familiarise ourselves with the context of this study and highlight the need for such research. The Omani education system, especially its higher education system, is considered new, having begun after 1970. Whilst the establishment of public HE was intended to qualify Omani youth in order to carry out different jobs and contribute to the building of a modern Oman, the establishment of private HE was intended to absorb the increasing numbers of high school graduates that public HEIs were unable to accommodate. The retention of academic staff is vital to maintaining the quality of education provided to Omani youth, and therefore plays a key role in the modern Omani renaissance.

# Chapter 3: Literature Review

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will review the existing literature on the topic of this study. It will first explore the concept of staff retention and highlight its importance; then, it will present the concept of incentives and introduce the different kinds. Next, the theoretical framework of this study will be outlined, the research gap will be identified, and finally, the research questions will be presented.

## 3.2 Staff Retention

This section will introduce the concept of staff retention before exploring its importance.

### 3.2.1 The Concept of Staff Retention

The Oxford English Dictionary defines retention as ‘the action of keeping something rather than losing it or stopping it’ (oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com). In the context of human resources or the workplace, the Cambridge Dictionary defines it as ‘the ability of a company to keep its employees and stop them from going to work somewhere else’ (dictionary.cambridge.org).

Chitsaz-Isfahani and Boustani (2014, p.118) argue that retention is a complex concept and there is no single formula for keeping staff within an organisation. Lee et al. (1994) support this viewpoint and understand staff retention to refer to all the efforts made by an organisation to increase its chances of keeping staff for a longer time. Furthermore, Moncraz et al. (2009, pp.437-438) define staff retention as the initiatives and practices that organisations adopt to positively influence their staff’s job satisfaction and commitment to the organisations, which in turn enable organisations to hold onto their excellent and talented staff for a longer time. According to Ongori’s (2007, p.52) definition, staff retention refers to the practices organisations use to prevent precious employees from quitting their jobs.

Academic staff retention refers to the ability of higher education institutions to not only recruit qualified academic staff but also retain them by offering a high quality work-life, a motivated staff climate, and a commitment to best practices in managing human resources and talent (Bushe, 2012, p.279). The aim is to influence staff members to become committed and loyal to the institution by improving job satisfaction and enhancing organisational commitment (Selesho and Naile, 2014, p.296).

### 3.2.2 The Importance of Staff Retention

Successful organisations pay special attention and care to the retention of their qualified staff. The sustainability of an organisation’s success depends mainly on its ability to retain the competencies that form the backbone of the organisation. According to Sinha and Sinha (2012, pp.145-146), the success of an organisation depends on innovation, creativity and flexibility, and this cannot be achieved unless the organisation has qualified, loyal and skilled staff members. Moreover, Sinha and Sinha report on many studies that have shown that retaining staff is the most critical challenge for organisations in the immediate future. The greatest challenge facing decision-makers is how to reduce staff turnover (Min, 2007, p.377).

Chukwu et al. (2013, p.340) emphasise that staff resignation costs organisations huge amounts of money in recruiting and training new employees. Moreover, if resigning staff members leave an organisation with bad feelings, it might influence their colleagues’ attitudes towards the organisation and potentially result in additional resignations and make it more difficult to recruit replacement staff.

The retention of qualified academic staff is a serious concern as their resignation affects the quality, consistency, and stability of higher education institutions (HEIs). In addition, academic staff members’ resignations can have detrimental effects on remaining academic staff members, who might be given higher workloads to compensate. The resignation of an academic staff member may also have detrimental effects on students if the positions are subsequently covered or filled by inexperienced or less qualified people. Moreover, the loss of experienced academic staff can adversely impact the reputation of an institution, undermining trust and encouraging remaining academic staff members to leave (Selesho and Naile, 2014, p.295).

Thus, an appropriate understanding of academic staff members' expectations of their work environments is critical for any higher education institution to retain its academic staff members. By understanding the nature of retention problems, institutions can decide which retention initiatives should be taken to manage the overall levels of staff retention and ensure that they have sufficient staff (Musah and Nkuah, 2013, p.119). Selesho and Naile (2014, p.296) argue that developing an understanding of the causes and antecedents of resignation is the first step toward taking action to keep turnover to a minimum. Thus, to retain staff effectively, employers must know what factors motivate their staff to stay in the field and what factors cause them to leave.

According to Samuel and Chipunza (2009), the main purpose of retention is to prevent the loss of competent employees as this could have adverse effects on productivity and profitability. Das and Baruah (2013, p.8) state that any organisation seeking to enhance its performance needs to develop appropriate strategies for employee recruitment and retention. Thus, the core approach in any organisation is to make continuous, ongoing efforts to identify and strive to keep the best performers irrespective of their age.

The economy of the 21$^{st}$ century is knowledge-based, which means it is highly global, informative, and technology-based. This economy needs a sufficient and competent workforce that can meet the challenges of the changing world (Mubarak et al., 2012, p.66). Since higher education institutions provide societies with valuable research and knowledge, as well as educating the generations that build economies and societies, retaining the academic staff who conduct this mission is crucial.

Retaining qualified staff is important to any institution aiming to gain a competitive advantage over its competitors. Also, having the same staff members work together over an extended period of time can help increase workplace harmony, thus engendering a positive impact on productivity and increasing the speed at which operations are conducted (Hong et al., 2012, p.61).

The very nature of universities makes them depots for the most expert and skilled intellectuals, and a university's retention of highly qualified academic staff members is reflected in its ranking (Selesho and Naile, 2014, p.296).

Selesho and Naile (2014, pp.297-298) confirm that staff retention at HEIs is an important concern as a high turnover rate among academic staff poses a major challenge to these institutions. High staff turnover has critical effects on organisational effectiveness and human well-being (Thaden et al., 2010, p.408). In the case of the higher education sector, when positions are vacant or filled by less-qualified academic staff members, the remaining competent members struggle to cope and students suffer by receiving a lower quality education. Selesho and Naile (2014, p.298) state that high turnover rates can reinforce students' mistrust of the education system and discourage other academic staff from remaining in, or even entering, the field.

Patgar and Vijayakumar (2015, p.2) emphasise the importance of retaining staff, as the hiring process itself is not easy; so, when institutions invest time and money in hiring and training staff, it is costly and troublesome to lose them, especially if they have been working for the institution for a long time and have become familiar with the institution's policies and guidelines. Netswera et al. (2005, p.36) add that high staff turnover also costs institutions enormous amounts of money due to the associated drop in productivity and the cost of finding replacements.

## 3.3 Incentives

Retaining employees has become a challenge for organisations in today's world (Selesho and Naile, 2014), and higher education institutions are not exempt from this challenge when it comes to keeping their academic staff. Therefore, institutions tend to use incentives as a way of motivating, satisfying, and retaining their staff and reducing their intention to leave. Incentives come in many forms, so it is essential for institutions to identify and select the ones that best fit their staff's needs.

This section will mainly discuss incentives. First, the concept of incentives will be discussed, followed by an outline of the different kinds of incentives. Finally, the impact of financial incentives and non-financial incentives will be discussed in general and more specifically with regard to retention.

### 3.3.1 The Concept of Incentives

The Oxford English Dictionary defines an incentive as 'something that encourages you to do something' (oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com). Bruni et al. (2019) state that all the motivations that drive human action are almost invariably referred to as "incentives".

A work-place incentive has been defined variously as any source or medium that encourages employees to perform better and to exert more effort (Ijaz and Khan, 2013, p.37), and as a method used by an institution to encourage staff to work with high spirits or satisfy employees' moral and material desires (Aziri, 2011; Palmer, 2012; Alsharah, 2014). Additionally, incentives can be understood as mechanisms used to motivate or to achieve a desired behaviour (Sanderson, 2016, p.18); in the case of this study, having the intention to stay is the desired behaviour HEIs want to encourage in their academic staff.

According to Al-Nsour (2012, p.79), incentives 'play an active role in pushing forward [an] individual's capacity and moving abilities, motivating them to develop their skills, and balance between organization requirements and the individuals' needs which enhance the organization's performance efficiently and effectively'.

From the above, it can be concluded that incentives are mechanisms used to encourage and maintain employees' good performance, and they encourage retention by giving employees something in return. Both financial and non-financial incentives will be introduced below along with their impacts.

### 3.3.2 Kinds of Incentives

Incentives are classified in different ways. The first classification, which distinguishes between individual and team-based incentives, will be introduced briefly in this section. Next, the second classification, which distinguishes between financial (monetary) and non-financial (non-monetary) incentives, will be discussed in detail as it is the classification that will be applied in this study.

#### *Individual-Based Incentives vs. Team-Based Incentives*

Individual-based incentives (personal incentives) are those that encourage employees to make personal efforts, while team-based incentives (group incentives) are provided to employees to encourage teamwork. An example of an individual incentive, cited by Franck and Opitz (2006, p.662), is to be found in Germany, where professors are not given salary raises unless they have received a job offer from another university, at which point they are allowed to negotiate for a higher salary in addition to better working conditions, such as research budgets, numbers of assistantships, and amount of working time. This means professors' incentives are reviewed on an individual basis, which exemplifies individual incentives.

On the other hand, when talking about team-based incentives, Lazear (2018, p.200) considers a high-skilled employee who has the ability to help other employees develop their own skills. Lazear believes that if that employee is paid based on their individual output, they would have no incentive to help others. However, if that employee is assigned to a relatively small team and paid partly on the basis of team output, the employee would engage in a trade-off between spending time on personal work and spending time helping others. If compensation is based solely on the output of the team, the employee might even find it useful to spend most or all of their time helping others. Condly et al. (2003, p.46) argue that team-based incentives have a markedly greater impact on performance than individual incentives.

### *Financial Incentives vs. Non-Financial Incentives*

Financial incentives (also known as monetary incentives) are defined by Al-Nsour (2012, p.79) as 'the amounts paid to employees, either in the form of a lump sum or in the form of monthly payments'. According to Ijaz and Khan (2013, p.37), financial incentives include direct payments of cash. Designing and evaluating targeted financial incentives requires a good understanding of employees' needs. Lawzi (1995) states that financial incentives such as salary, bonuses, allowances, profit-sharing, and rewards are provided to satisfy basic human needs and to encourage employees to work hard and improve their capabilities.

Financial incentives are considered the oldest forms of incentives and are characterised as quick and immediate incentives. One key advantage of financial incentives is that their rapid and immediate effect on the individuals' efforts motivates them to do their work, improve their productivity, increase the organisation's income, and give a better performance. In addition, financial incentives are the subject of a good deal of psychological and social interest among employees, who are keen to enhance their purchasing power (Al-Nsour, 2012, p.79).

Mannion (2014, pp.95-96) states that many economists and psychologists believe financial incentives can motivate behavioural changes such as improvements in work quality and performance. Moreover, many studies have shown that the more dissatisfaction employees feel with their financial incentives, the higher the risk that they will leave the organisation (e.g. DeConinck and Stilwell, 2004; Currall et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2006, 2008; De Gieter and Hofmans, 2015). Thus, those studies found a negative relationship between satisfaction with incentives and resignation intention.

On the other hand, non-financial incentives (also known as non-monetary incentives) are non-cash incentives, such as merchandise, travel opportunities, and retail gift cards that have monetary value but cannot be exchanged for cash (McPhee, 2013, p.5). Non-financial incentives may also take the form of autonomy, flexible hours, and involvement in decision-making (Al-Nsour, 2012, p.79; Ijaz and Khan, 2013, p.38).

According to Brandes and Darai (2017), traditionally, research in the area of motivation has focused on the influence of financial incentives on employees' efforts. However, over the last decade, interest in the effectiveness of non-financial incentives has been on the rise. Non-financial incentives – or moral incentives, as they are called by some authors – are those related to psychological aspects (Al-Nsour, 2012, p.79). Moral incentives are based on respect for a human being as someone who has feelings, hopes and aspirations (Akaili, 1996).

Non-financial incentives can work effectively as they have a significant impact on employees' motivation and productivity (Tausif, 2012; Cassar and Meier, 2018). Non-financial incentives are actually considered the most important tools for rewarding employees (Abdullah and Wan, 2013, p.1087). Indeed, Atambo et al. (2013, pp.32-33) and Kosfeld et al. (2017) argue that non-financial incentives are more effective tools in the workplace than the financial incentives. Jeffrey (2004), who analyses the use of financial and non-financial motivational strategies and their psychological effects, finds that cash lacks trophy value because it does not have a long life; it comes and goes. Non-financial incentives, on the other hand, have higher trophy value, and thus constitute more valuable and effective incentives. Thus, Jeffery concludes that non-financial incentives have a deeper and longer-term effect on motivation than financial incentives do.

According to Corgnet et al. (2018, pp.311-321), psychologists and behavioural economists have challenged the idea that employees' motivation relies exclusively on financial incentives. Corgnet et al. suggest that non-financial incentives can remain effective even when financial incentives are widely available. Thus, they believe that non-financial incentives are not just second-best solutions that should be turned to when financial incentives are too costly to implement, but that both types of incentives effectively motivate employees. Corgnet et al. also observe that studies tend to focus on the impact of financial incentives as motivational tools, while the impact of non-financial incentives has been generally neglected.

Henderson and Tulloch (2008, pp.8-9) state that several studies have shown that financial incentives alone are not sufficient to retain employees. Instead, a range of non-financial incentives is needed to complete a package that will attract and encourage employees to stay with a particular organisation. In addition to the financial incentives, the package should include broad categories of non-financial incentives, such as good working conditions, professional development in the form of continuing education and training, and improved management and supervision skills.

Mahmood and Zaman (2010, p.731) suggest that what is to be considered the most effective type of incentive depends on the situation. For example, in low-income environments where people are unable to fulfil their basic needs, non-financial incentives may not be efficient. However, there are situations in which employees respond to non-financial incentives in hard times when there is a lack of financial incentives, and they decide not to quit even if they receive a more lucrative offer from another organisation (Mahmood and Zaman, 2010).

Economists have studied the impacts of incentives on people's actions (Erkal et al., 2018, p.530). The basis of this economic analysis is that people respond to incentives. Based on this understanding, economists believe that incentives are powerful tools for interpreting and changing individual behaviour. The literature largely focuses on distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and studying their impacts on particular behaviours, whereas this study will distinguish between financial and non-financial incentives to examine their impacts on a particular behaviour.

Specifically, this study will focus on distinguishing between financial and non-financial incentives and study their impact on the retention of academic staff members; in other words, their intention to stay or leave their current institutions. In the real world, financial and non-financial incentives contribute to behaviour in important ways (Erkal et al., 2018, p.530). Abu Bakar et al. (2017) state that the role of financial and non-financial incentives is to motivate employees to do their best and diligently invest their efforts and skills to help achieve the organisation's goals. In addition, Dee and Wyckoff (2015, p.267) believe that incentives impact teachers' performance and retention.

The following sections will discuss the two types of incentives (financial and non-financial) in more detail.

## 1. Financial Incentives

The financial incentives that will be presented in this section are salary, fringe benefits, and promotion. Salary and fringe benefits will be combined into one section here because many studies discuss them together, categorising them as 'pay' or 'compensation'.

### *Salary and Fringe Benefits*

Salary (which includes base salary, allowances, and overtime) and fringe benefits (bonuses, health insurance, pension, etc.), or what are referred to by some authors as 'pay' or 'compensation', are considered the most important incentives in staff retention. Pay is one of the key factors in the workplace that affects both recruitment and retention (Metcalf et al., 2005, p.xiv). Neog and Barua (2015, p.12) stress that a compensation system, including salary and fringe benefits, plays a significant role in attracting and retaining talented long-term staff and reducing resignations. Metcalf et al. (2005) add that dissatisfaction with pay levels or the perception of unfair pay can lead to academic staff leaving their institutions.

According to Fulbeck (2014, p.67), low salaries can constitute a reason for schoolteachers to resign. Thus, he believes that if teachers were offered more financial incentives, such as a higher salary or additional pay in the form of fringe benefits (such as bonuses), they would become more satisfied with their jobs and retention would increase. Conversely, the presence of fewer or smaller incentives increases resignations. A study conducted by Feng and Sass (2018) exploring the impact of incentives like bonuses on the retention of high school teachers in the United States revealed that when a one-time bonus of $1,200 was provided to teachers, their attrition/resignation rate decreased by 25%.

Jeffrey and Shaffer (2007) argue that a raise in salary does not have the same motivational effect as fringe benefits. According to Henderson and Tulloch (2008, pp.2-5), employees might leave their jobs to obtain better salaries or benefits such as access to education for their children. They note that financial incentives, such as higher salaries, allowances, and benefits, have been shown to be an important motivating factor for employees, especially in countries where government salaries are insufficient to meet the basic needs of employees and their families. The authors emphasise that improved salaries and benefits are major financial incentives for employees to remain.

Osibanjo et al.'s (2014, p.65) study findings also indicate that there is strong correlation between the tested independent variables (salary, allowances, bonuses, and fringe benefits) and the dependent variable (staff retention). Hence, they believe that management and decision-makers should endeavour to review compensation packages at various levels in order to increase their employees' satisfaction and prevent high turnover among staff members. Randy et al. (2002, p.402) indicate that in Hong Kong and China, base salary, overtime allowance, merit pay/individual bonuses, year-end bonuses, mortgage loans or housing provision, and profit-sharing are the most effective incentives for retaining and motivating employees.

The positive impact of salaries and fringe benefits on retaining academic staff members in HEIs is demonstrated by many studies (e.g. Tettey, 2006; Chiboiwa et al., 2010; Hong et al., 2012; Mubarak et al., 2012; Musah and Nkuah, 2013; Oyagi and Kembu, 2014; Osibanjo et al., 2014).

***Promotion***

Promotion has a positive and close relationship with job satisfaction, which in turn helps retain employees. Talented employees are important for any organisation seeking to maintain a competitive advantage, so it is important they understand that employees tend to seek out opportunities to climb the career ladder, usually through promotion (Das and Baruah, 2013, p.11).

Bushe (2012, p.293) cites promotion as a significant factor in academic retention in the United Kingdom, and reports that academic staff believe most of the promotion practices at their current universities to be unfair, which consequently causes them to consider leaving their jobs. Transparency, clarity, and distributive justice are essential in the promotion processes of any institution to satisfy and retain staff (Henderson and Tulloch, 2008).

Lazear (2018, p.202) believes that salary raises and promotions always motivate staff to make greater efforts, as they wish to increase their chances of being promoted, which is also good for their institutions' performance. However, Lazear stresses that the requirements for promotion should not be too difficult to meet as this could cause staff to consider leaving. Moreover, Metcalf et al. (2005) state that increasing opportunities for promotion can increase academic staff retention. The positive and significant impact of promotion on retaining academic staff is also demonstrated by Ng'ethe (2013) and Oyagi and Kembu (2014).

## 2. Non-Financial Incentives

Non-financial incentives that positively influence staff motivation and performance include recognition and appreciation; improved working and living conditions; continuing education, training and professional development; supportive supervision and leadership; good relationships at work and a healthy team climate; the availability of appropriate resources; and the chance to have input on how to do one's job (Henderson and Tulloch, 2008, pp.8-9; De Gieter et al., 2008; Ijaz and Khan, 2013, p.37; De Gieter and Hofmans, 2015, p.201; Grant et al., 2018, p.3). Thus, the four categories of non-financial incentives that will be presented in this section are leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, working conditions, and recognition and appreciation.

### ***Leadership and Supervision Skills***

Leadership refers to a specific behaviour practised by a leader to motivate his or her subordinates to accomplish the objectives of their organisation (Mehta et al., 2014, p.157). Leadership and supervision skills are a form of non-financial incentive that may include such features as involving employees in decision-making, showing concern for individuals' issues, fair treatment of all staff, communication and an open-door policy, and prompt responses to staff issues (Ijaz and Khan, 2013, pp.37-38; Mehta et al., 2014, p.157). Effective leadership can allow employees to enjoy their jobs and, as a consequence, they work harder and perform in ways that benefit the organisation (Kvaløy et al., 2015, p.27).

Moreover, by being thoroughly involved in the decision-making process, employees are made to feel motivated and committed to their workplace. Employees who feel a sense of commitment are less likely to have intentions to leave, which makes this leadership strategy favourable for retention (Mehta et al., 2014, p.157). According to Selesho and Naile (2014, p.296), staff are more likely to remain with an institution if they trust that the institution has an interest in them and is concerned about them, if they know what is expected from them, if they are given a role that fits their capabilities, and if they receive regular feedback and recognition. In addition, taking the time to listen to employees and making them feel involved fosters loyalty, which in turn reduces turnover and facilitates the organisation's growth (Costello, 2006).

According to Netswera et al. (2005, p.36), in order to achieve good staff retention, there should be frequent communication to clarify what each staff member is expected to contribute to the vision and mission of the institution, and there should be understanding of staff members' needs. It is important to provide training not only to staff, but also to management, who should be trained in effective leadership and supervision skills. In addition, paying the most talented staff members what they are worth is important to develop a climate of trust between the management and staff and to maintain the staff members' ongoing commitment.

According to Musah and Nkuah (2013), good working relationships between academic staff and management are among the factors that can ensure staff motivation and retention. Dissatisfaction with relations with managers and a lack of freedom to use one's own initiative increase the likelihood of leaving the sector, according to the findings of Metcalf et al. (2005). Ng'ethe's (2013) study reveals that leadership has a strong effect on academics' intention to stay or leave. Similarly, Bigirimana et al. (2016) state that an unfavourable leadership style leads to situations where academic staff leave their universities at the earliest opportunity. Thus, Mehta et al. (2014) emphasise that leaders in universities must possess a selection of leadership skills to be effective.

### ***Continuing Professional Development***

Continuing professional development – or simply, "career development", as Abu Bakar et al. (2017) call it – is the series of activities or the ongoing or lifelong process involved in developing an individual's career. Continuing professional development comprises ongoing education and training in new skills, obtaining increased job responsibilities, and making career changes within the same organisation. According to Mustafa and Ali (2019, pp.4-5), organisations offer their employees opportunities to increase their competences through developmental opportunities, such as job rotation, training, and further education.

Holbeche (1999) states that continuing professional development has always been a significant concern for employees in organisations. Abu Bakar et al. (2017) believe that continuing professional development enhances employees' job performance and is also useful in improving their morale regarding their day-to-day responsibilities within their organisation. It also works as a way of rewarding employees for good work, and it is considered essential to show recognition of high achievements within an organisation (Rose, 1998). Abu Bakar et al. (2017) emphasise that continuing professional development as a form of non-financial incentive has mostly been considered an effective method that contributes to attracting and retaining employees.

Mustafa and Ali (2019, pp.4-5) state that employees generally value competence development practices, and those with high developmental prospects exhibit positive performance outcomes and a higher intention to stay with their current organisation. Growth and development practices convey a message to employees that their employability is appreciated and that their contributions are highly valued by their organisation. Moreover, development opportunities imply that the organisation trusts the current abilities of its employees and wants them to develop further. This suggests that development practices reflect an organisation's focus on nurturing employee competence and capabilities and fostering their sense of worth and belonging in the organisation.

In addition, equity should be practised at all times when undertaking any development practices. Bushe (2012, p.293) emphasises that when vacancies arise within an organisation, employees should be given equal opportunity and the necessary encouragement to apply for higher positions. When employees feel that they have the opportunity to be promoted, they tend to build their life and career plans around the organisation, which can strengthen their intentions to stay. In addition, managers should focus on helping employees develop in their careers. This is especially true for young and inexperienced employees, who are likely to quit an organisation for another if they feel they can find better job prospects elsewhere.

Opportunity for growth has a positive and close relationship with job satisfaction, which in turn helps in retaining employees (Das and Baruah, 2013, p.11). Many studies have found that in the higher education sector, different forms of continuing professional development (such as ongoing training and opportunities for learning and growth) positively and significantly influence academic staff retention (e.g. Netswera et al., 2005; Hong et al., 2012; Mubarak et al., 2012; Musah and Nkuah, 2013; Ng'ethe, 2013; Oyagi and Kembu, 2014; Onah and Anikwe, 2016).

***Working Conditions***

Working conditions constitute a broad incentive that involves many factors. These can be classified into 1) factors related to staff autonomy and working environment (e.g., flexible working schedules (Burns and McKinnon, 1993; Abu Bakar et al., 2017; Mustafa and Ali, 2019), picnics, social events organised at the workplace (Mahmood and Zaman, 2010; Donze and Gunnes, 2018), job security (Jandaghi et al., 2011; Das and Baruah, 2013), and relations with colleagues (Metcalf et al., 2005)), and 2) factors related to appropriate resources and infrastructure that help employees to do their jobs effectively (e.g., appropriate office space, availability of restrooms, availability of resources and equipment (Bushe, 2012; Mehta et al., 2014)).

Mustafa and Ali (2019, pp.4-5) state that an organisation's support for staff autonomy, which can involve offering employees opportunities to make their own choices and self-organise, has a positive impact on employees' performance as autonomy support is conducive to the satisfaction of employees' basic psychological needs. In addition, flexible working schedules also have a positive impact on employees' performance as they lead to improved morale and better work-life balance, according to Burns and McKinnon (1993). Abu Bakar et al. (2017) note that when employees have a good working environment, they tend to feel good about their jobs, which significantly influences their job performance.

Workload is another factor related to autonomy and work environment. Workload refers to the amount of work that is delegated to a particular employee (Qureshi et al., 2013, p.766). Xiaoming et al. (2014, p.230) understand "workload" as the psychological and physical effort required of an employee to accomplish their required tasks. If an employee's workload is perceived as exceeding their personal abilities, this can result in reactions of anxiety, stress, or annoyance. Such reactions can change the material and psychological conditions of a normal individual, as well as their behaviours, and result in dissatisfaction.

Factors related to working conditions (such as workload, flexible work hours or opportunities to work from home, safety and security strategies, social activities, appropriate office space, availability of restrooms, and availability of tools and equipment) can create satisfaction or dissatisfaction amongst employees and lead them to either staying or leaving (Jandaghi et al., 2011; Bushe, 2012; Das and Baruah, 2013; Mehta et al., 2014; Donze and Gunnes, 2018). Henderson and Tulloch (2008, pp.2-9) indicate that the wish to find more desirable working conditions is one of the key drivers of employee resignation. Thus, the working environment has a strong influence on job satisfaction and retention.

In the higher education sector, Metcalf et al. (2005) and Tettey (2006) stress that academic staff members who feel that their workload is too heavy are more likely to leave their institutions. The reason is that they do not have enough time for research due to the high teaching and administrative demands placed upon them. Moreover, dissatisfaction with relations with colleagues also increases the likelihood of academics' resigning (Metcalf et al., 2005). Bigirimana et al. (2016) indicate that unfavourable working conditions, including heavy workloads, lead to academic staff leaving their universities at the earliest opportunity.

Many studies have demonstrated the impact of autonomy and work environment on academic staff members' intention to stay or leave (e.g. Netswera et al., 2005; Oyagi and Kembu, 2014; Onah and Anikwe, 2016). Also, dissatisfaction with infrastructure and resources increases the likelihood of staff leaving their HEIs (Metcalf et al., 2005; Tettey, 2006; Samuel and Chipunza, 2013).

### ***Recognition and Appreciation***

Recognition and appreciation of employees producing a desirable performance is a non-financial incentive that can take different forms, such as letters of thanks, certificates of appreciation, employee of the month awards, award ceremonies, respecting employees' perspectives, training for distinguished employees, travel awards, or small gifts like coupons for restaurants, merchandise, retail gift cards, etc. (Mahmood and Zaman, 2010; Al-Nsour, 2012; Ijaz and Khan, 2013; McPhee, 2013; Kosfeld et al., 2017; Mustafa and Ali, 2019).

Mustafa and Ali (2019, pp.4-5) argue that recognition has to be a constructive response to an employee's contribution and his or her engagement and commitment to work. Recognition indicates that the organisation appreciates the employees' efforts and values and celebrates their success. Gunawan and Febrianto (2014, p.61) argue that praise from immediate managers is best as it makes employees feel valued and part of the organisation's future.

Moreover, Mustafa and Ali (2019, pp.4-5) suggest that acknowledging employees' efforts and good work has beneficial effects on their psychological outcomes, such as in the form of improved morale and self-esteem. This is reinforced by Abu Bakar et al. (2017) who indicate that recognition is important as it serves to encourage employees to be confident and to believe in themselves in order to deliver quality products and services, as well as to generate loyalty to the organisation.

In addition, Kosfeld et al. (2017) and Abu Bakar et al. (2017) consider recognition as a non-financial incentive to be a powerful motivator for staff. Lawzi (1995) states that recognition and appreciation increase employees' satisfaction and loyalty to their organisation.

However, few studies have discussed the relationship between recognition and academic staff retention in HEIs. Oyagi and Kembu (2014) observe that recognition has a positive and significant influence on academic staff retention. This is also reinforced by Musah and Nkuah (2013), who stress that high remuneration and recognition for performance are the key factors that influence staff to stay at their institutions.

## 3.4 Theoretical Framework

This section introduces the theoretical framework for this study. As there are no theories related specifically to measuring staff retention, Two-Factor Theory, Equity Theory, and Expectancy Theory have been adopted to help in understanding the impact of incentives on academic staff retention.

1. ***Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory***

Two-Factor Theory was developed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959. According to Herzberg (1959, 1966), employees tend to describe satisfying experiences in terms of factors that he terms "motivators", which include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement and growth. Conversely, dissatisfying experiences are termed "hygiene" factors, which include company policies, salary, relations with co-workers, and supervisory styles. Herzberg argues that eliminating the causes of dissatisfaction (the hygiene factors) would not result in a state of satisfaction, but would instead result in a neutral state. Satisfaction (and motivation) occurs only as a result of the use of motivators (Ramlall, 2004).

In other words, Herzberg concludes that the work factors that contribute to employees' satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) can be divided into two categories: motivation factors and hygiene factors. Motivation factors comprise those elements that strongly affect job satisfaction, while hygiene factors are those that contribute less strongly to job satisfaction but must be present to meet an employee's expectations and prevent job dissatisfaction (Skripak, 2016) (see Figure 3.1).

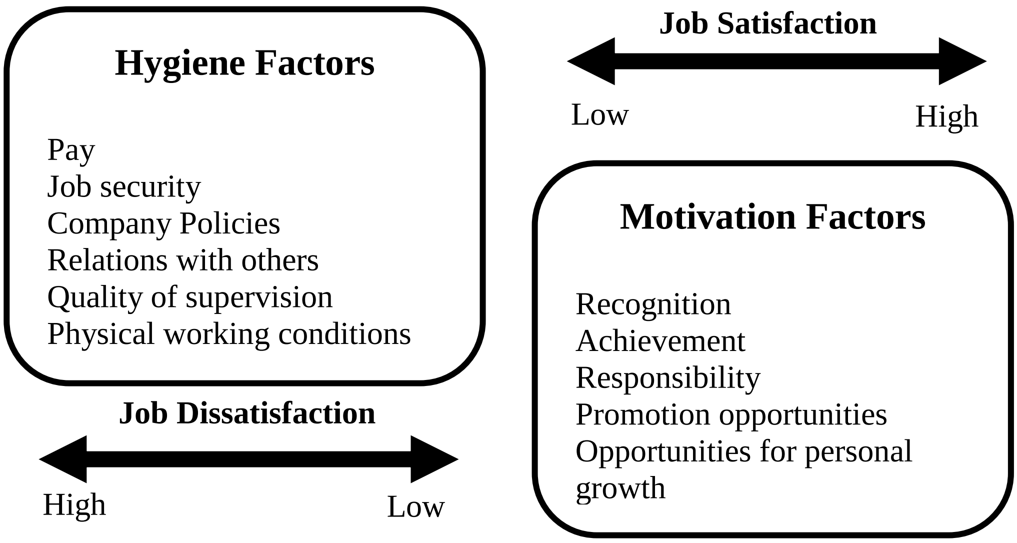


**Figure 3.1: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory**

**(Source: Skripak, 2016, p.235)**

Two-Factor Theory has been adopted in previous studies exploring factors affecting staff retention. Bushe (2012, p.283) reviews the literature to explore the factors affecting academic staff retention in private tertiary institutions in Botswana and concludes that Two-Factor Theory is relevant to his study because it recognises that there are two categories of employees' needs. Bushe states that this theory is useful for establishing which factors curb job dissatisfaction and which increase the motivation of academic staff in private tertiary colleges and universities.

The theory is also utilised by Ssesanga and Garrett (2005, pp.33-37) to investigate factors contributing to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among academics in Uganda. In their study, they discuss the findings in the light of Herzberg's theory and conclude that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors can lead to academics experiencing job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. However, the findings of that study do not fully support Herzberg's theory, which holds that intrinsic factors are the motivators that contribute most strongly to job satisfaction, while extrinsic factors (or "hygiene factors", as Herzberg calls them) do not motivate employees, but must be present to reduce job dissatisfaction.

Similarly, Samuel and Chipunza (2009, p.410) use Two-Factor Theory as the theoretical background to explore the motivational factors influencing staff retention in private and public organisations in South Africa. Their findings show that employees in both public and private sector organisations are, to a large extent, influenced to stay in their respective organisations by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. Once again, that study's findings do not fully support Herzberg's theory.

Chiboiwa et al. (2010, pp.2103-2109) adopt Two-Factor Theory to examine the effectiveness of employee retention strategy in a private company in Zimbabwe. The research outcome suggests that the unstable economic environment in Zimbabwe may mean that pay significantly influences retention, which in turn might explain why the retention practices at the company in question are ineffective. In contrast with the assumption of Herzberg's theory that pay may reduce dissatisfaction but not increase satisfaction, the study suggests that pay is an important factor that may increase satisfaction and retention specifically because of the contextual issue of inflation in Zimbabwe. However, despite some evidence that contradicts the assumptions of Herzberg's theory, it has not been disproved. Furthermore, there is a need for it to be tested in different contexts, especially in the context of the developing world (Ssesanga and Garrett 2005, p.37).

In Ng'ethe's (2013, pp.25-26) exploration of the determinants of academic staff retention in public universities in Kenya, she finds that Two-Factor Theory is relevant to her study because it recognises that employees have two categories of needs that should be addressed. Some needs are intrinsic to the work, such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth. Other factors are extrinsic and non-job-related, such as company policies, salary, co-worker relationships, supervisory or management styles, and the work environment. Thus, Ng'ethe (2013, p.59) develops a conceptual framework for her study based on this theory with the dependent variable being academic staff retention. The independent variables are extrinsic factors (leadership style and remuneration) and intrinsic factors (training and promotion).

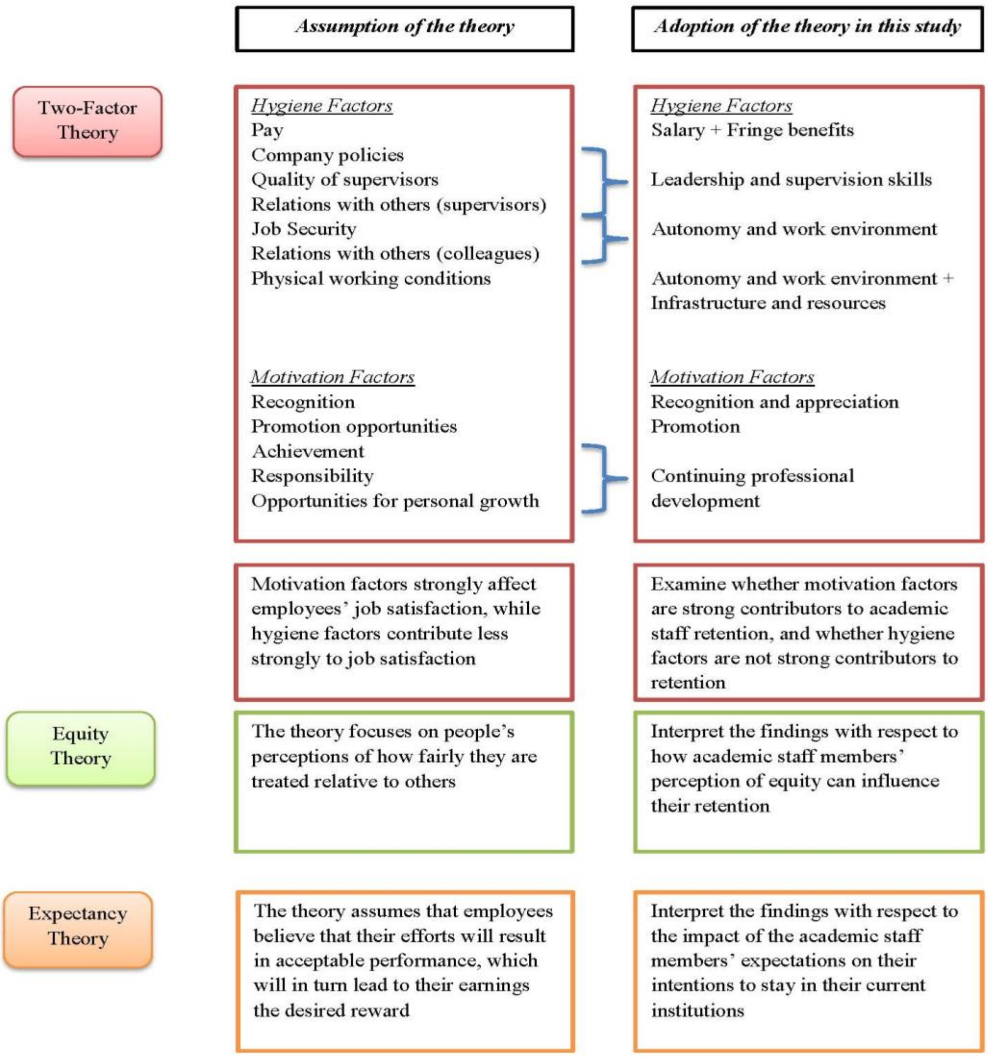


**Figure 3.2: Theoretical Framework**

From an examination of the previous studies, it appears that Two-Factor Theory would be helpful for extracting the independent variables for this study. Figure 3.2 presents the hygiene and motivation factors according to the theory and indicates the particular corresponding factors in the context of this study. In this study, salary and fringe benefits correspond to pay in Herzberg's theory. Leadership and supervision skills comprise company policies, quality of supervisors, and relationship with supervisors. Job security and relations with colleagues will be represented by autonomy and work environment in this study. Working conditions in terms of safety and workload are part of autonomy and work environment, while academics' offices and teaching resources and infrastructure are represented by infrastructure and resources. Recognition and promotion opportunities will be referred to as "recognition and appreciation", and "promotion", respectively. The last factor analysed in this study is continuing professional development, which will include achievement, responsibility, and opportunities for personal growth.

The theory is also adopted in this study to examine whether motivation factors are strong contributors to retention, and whether hygiene factors are not strong contributors to retention. However, it is important to acknowledge a limitation of this theory in that it predicts that all employees react in identical ways to changes in motivating/hygiene factors (Bushe, 2012, p.283). This study will therefore incorporate two other theories in its theoretical framework, which will allow for more comprehensive analysis and also help compensate for the limitations inherent to each individual theory.

### 2. ***Equity Theory***

Equity Theory was developed by John Stacey Adams in 1965. Adams (1965) suggests that an individual's perception of equity or fairness is based on comparing his/her inputs and outputs with others' inputs and outputs. In other words, this theory focuses on people's perceptions of how fairly they are treated relative to others. In the context of the work environment, Equity Theory suggests that employees compare the job outcomes (salary, bonus, promotion, recognition, etc.) they receive for their job input (hours worked, education, experience, work performance, etc.) to those of other employees. The comparison might be with someone in a similar position, someone holding a different position in the same organisation, someone with a similar occupation in a different organisation, someone who shares certain characteristics (such as age, education, or experience), or with oneself at another point in time (Ramlall, 2004; Skripak, 2016).

Equity Theory has been used as a theoretical framework for studies exploring factors that influence staff retention. Chiboiwa et al.'s (2010) study combines Equity Theory with Two-Factor Theory in its theoretical framework. According to Chiboiwa et al. (2010, pp.2104-2105), employees who perceive themselves as being under-rewarded tend to leave a company. This results in the company losing its productive talent and its capacity to gain a competitive advantage, especially when the departing employees are its high performers. In Bushe's (2012, p.285) literature review, Equity Theory is proposed as a useful framework for exploring inequitable practices, such as discriminatory pay structures, and can be used to help employers craft and apply policies that enhance equity amongst academic staff. Bushe concludes that the theory can be applied in private tertiary education institutions in Botswana to determine employees' perceptions of equity.

Equity Theory is also part of the theoretical framework for Ng'ethe's (2013) study. Ng'ethe (2013, p.21) states that the major strength of this theory is that it recognises that individual inputs, such as education, experience, and effort, should be recognised in such a way that equity is experienced. This theory therefore provides a guide to understanding what may influence academic staff to leave, in light of the fact that they keep comparing what academic staff earn in other universities and other comparable organisations in order to investigate and compare the input-output ratio. In addition, there is another type of equity, internal equity, which deals with comparisons of rewards across different jobs within the same organisation (Ng'ethe, 2013, p.36). Based on the perceptions of the academic staff, Ng'ethe's study concludes that promotion criteria and practices were not being fairly applied. The findings also indicate that promotion influences academic staff retention. Thus, perceptions of inequity might be one of the reasons for staff leaving the university.

As this study includes academic staff from different demographic groups (e.g., institutions, nationalities, qualifications, etc.), Equity Theory will be adopted to interpret the findings with respect to how academic staff members' perception of equity or inequity can affect their intention to stay or leave (Figure 3.2 on page 46).

### 3. ***Expectancy Theory***

Expectancy Theory was developed by Victor Vroom in 1964. Vroom (1964) assumes that choices made by a person choosing from alternative courses of actions are related to psychological elements. When applied to the context of the workplace, the theory assumes that employees believe that their efforts will result in an acceptable performance, which will in turn lead to their earning the desired reward (Ramlall, 2004; Lunenburg, 2011; Estes and Polnick, 2012; Skripak, 2016). The reward here does not only refer to financial incentives, but includes all types of incentives (including both financial and non-financial).

Expectancy Theory is based on four assumptions (Vroom, 1964). The first assumption is that employees join organisations with expectations about their needs, incentives, and past experiences, all of which affect how employees react to their organisations. The second assumption is that an employee's behaviour is the result of conscious choices; that is, employees are free to choose the behaviours proposed by their own expectancy. The third assumption is that employees want different things from organisations (e.g. some employees are especially interested in a good salary, while others might be particularly concerned with another aspect, such as job security, advancement, or being challenged). The fourth assumption is that employees will choose among alternatives to optimise the outcomes for themselves personally (Lunenburg, 2011).

Expectancy Theory is widely used as a theoretical framework in previous studies. Kim et al. (1996, p.949) state that employees enter an organisation with expectations, and if these expectations are met, they are likely to stay in that organisation. Expectancy Theory suggests that there are three types of expectations: structural, psychological, and environmental. Structural factors include work environment, autonomy, communication, distributive justice, and workload; psychological factors include job satisfaction and organisational commitment; and environmental factors include the availability of job opportunities. For example, in the case of employees who have structural expectations, when these expectations are met, the employees tend to report high levels of intention to stay and their organisations are likely to experience lower levels of turnover (Dee, 2004, p.595).

Dee (2004, p.593) examines turnover intention in a U.S. urban community college. Dee's study explores the relationship between academic staff members' structural expectations and turnover intention. Expectancy Theory is employed as a framework to explore the relationship between turnover intention and academic staff members' perceptions of autonomy, organisational support for innovation, and collegial communication. The findings reveal that academic staff members who reported higher levels of support for innovation were less likely to indicate intentions to leave. The findings also suggest that community colleges can target innovation and organisational change as vehicles for enhancing academic staff retention rates. According to Expectancy Theory, academic staff members are less likely to seek employment elsewhere when their structural expectations are met.

Similarly, Expectancy Theory, along with Two-Factor Theory and Equity Theory, constitute the theoretical framework for Ng'ethe's (2013) study. According to Ng'ethe (2013, pp.55-56), structural factors can be a mixture of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and hence the study employs intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to identify the factors that may influence academic staff intention to stay or leave. Expectancy Theory was also utilised by

Tettey (2006) to help in designing the research instrument and in analysing the findings of a study commissioned by the World Bank to identify the mechanisms affecting staff retention in African universities. Tettey (2006, p.16) uses the theory to explore both the structural and psychological expectations of work life in order to put in place effective interventions to retain staff. The study justifies the use of the two types of expectations by the fact that different employees perceive the same structures and procedures differently.

Another study, carried out by Al-Omari et al. (2008), investigates the factors influencing academic staff retention in Jordanian public universities. The study tests a model of academic staff's intention to stay based on Expectancy Theory that includes structural, psychological, and environmental factors. The study concludes that the results support the assumptions of the model. The five structural factors – autonomy, communication openness, distributive justice, role conflict, and workload – were found to have a significant cumulative effect on intention to stay. Psychological factors exert an indirect effect on academics' intention to stay through both job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Job opportunity, as an external environmental factor, has a direct negative effect on intention to stay (Al-Omari et al., 2008, p.38). By reviewing the literature, Bushe (2012, p.284) concludes that the effort academic staff put into their work is directly related to their desired outcomes. Moreover, any efforts by higher education institutions in Botswana to motivate staff without a precise understanding of the specific outcomes they expect from their employers are found to be fruitless.

Thus, Expectancy Theory will also be adopted in this study to interpret the findings with respect to the impact of the academic staff members' expectations on their intentions to stay in or leave their current HEIs (see Figure 3.2 on page 46).

The limitation of all of the above theories (Two-Factor Theory, Equity Theory, and Expectancy Theory) is that they are not complete or comprehensive. This means that they cannot be used alone to interpret employees' behaviour; thus, more than one theory should always be used to examine this topic. This observation is applicable to all social science theories because human nature, behaviour, and attitudes are more subjective than objective and can never be completely objectified or theorised. Therefore, there is always a need to adopt more than one theory to be able to explain the topic under examination with greater rigour and comprehensiveness (Parijat and Bagga, 2014). With this limitation in mind, this study adopts more than one theory to explain the impact of incentives on academic staff retention or resignation.

This study also excludes other theories that are not relevant to its purpose. For example, it does not make use of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943), which suggests that employees have five levels of needs that are ranked hierarchically: biological and physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualising needs. Maslow suggests that needs must be satisfied in turn, meaning that those at the base of the pyramid have to be satisfied before those above them in order to motivate employees (Bushe, 2012, p.281). This concept is not applicable here as the purpose of this study is not to investigate how the incentives are ranked hierarchically or which incentives need to be satisfied first or whether the needs can really be ranked in this way. In addition, in the present society, an individual may have different needs that must be satisfied simultaneously. Thus, this theory is not in line with the aim of the study. Its rigidity in assuming that people focus their attention on a single need is its major weakness, and therefore it is not very useful in practice (Bushe, 2012, p.282). Ng'ethe et al. (2012) stress that Two-Factor Theory, Equity Theory, and Expectancy Theory are the most useful for addressing employees' needs, which is why the theories have been advanced by a number of authors as a basis for studying retention strategies in organisations.

## 3.5 Research Gap and Research Questions

After reviewing the previous research, it can be seen that while a number of studies have explored the factors affecting academic staff retention, they either focus on the factors in general without classification or classify the factors into intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. No studies were found that classify the factors in terms of financial and non-financial incentives in order to consider which type has more impact on the retention of academic staff. Also, all of the previous studies that have investigated the impact of financial or non-financial incentives in the HE sector and other sectors have concentrated on the impact of incentives on job satisfaction, employee motivation, or employee or organisation performance; but no studies were found that study the impact of incentives on retention. Therefore, this study will seek to understand the exact needs and concerns of academic staff members in order to investigate whether these needs and concerns are more related to financial or non-financial incentives.

It has also been noticed that previous studies about academic staff retention in higher education institutions have not focused on making comparisons between public and private HEIs. Instead, they have concentrated mainly on either public institutions or private ones. This study will investigate whether the institution type (public or private) has an influence on the retention of academic staff, making comparisons to examine whether the factors affecting the retention/resignation of academic staff members are the same or different at public and private HEIs.

In relation to the practical gap this study aims to fill, the researcher encountered no studies on academic staff retention at HEIs conducted in Oman, in particular, or in the Middle East, in general. Thus, this study aims to add a new perspective to previous studies as it is carried out in a high-income non-Western context in a Middle Eastern Arab Gulf state. Middle Eastern states with similar circumstances and cultures might benefit from the findings of this study. The findings of this study can be of benefit for organisations in these countries' other sectors as well as the entire education sector (including not only the higher education sector, but the schooling sector as well).

Therefore, the following research questions have been developed and will be addressed throughout this study:

1) What are the financial and non-financial incentives that impact academic staff retention at higher education institutions in Oman?
2) What are the factors leading to academic staff members' resignations at higher education institutions in Oman?
3) Which incentive type (financial or non-financial) has greater effect on retention?
4) How do characteristics such as institution type (public or private) and nationality (Omani or non-Omani) impact retention?

## 3.6 Summary

This chapter has critically evaluated the available literature related to the topic of this study. The meaning of staff retention was explained, as was the importance of staff retention for organisations in general and for HEIs in particular. The concept of incentives and the different kinds of incentives were also presented and discussed thoroughly. Finally, the theoretical framework for the study and research gap and questions were presented.

# Chapter 4: Methodology

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the design and methodology used in this study. It begins with a reminder of the study's purpose and research questions, followed by a description of the conceptual framework. Next, the research philosophy, paradigm and design are all explained, after which the sampling design and the data collection instruments are discussed.

## 4.2 Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of various incentives on academic staff retention in higher education institutions in Oman. As these incentives might be either financial or non-financial, this study examines the impact of each type on the retention of academic staff. It is essential for institutions to understand which type of incentive (financial or non-financial) better motivates and satisfies their academic staff as this knowledge increases an institution's ability to keep its staff. In addition, there are two types of higher education institutions – public and private – so it is important to understand whether there is any difference between them when it comes to staff retention and the incentives that encourage staff to stay.

As the literature review showed, the issue of academic staff retention has been studied in Western and in some African countries. Focusing on the context of Oman adds value to the present study because there appears to be currently no published work that focuses exclusively on issues related to academic staff retention at HEIs in the Middle East, particularly in the Gulf region, which includes Oman. This issue is of particular importance because higher education has been given special attention and allocated a huge budget by Oman's government in order to create a well-educated Omani generation who can assist in building a modern country. Therefore, issues like the large-scale resignation of qualified academic staff can impede this aim.

The research questions that have emerged from reviewing the literature are as follows:

1) What are the financial and non-financial incentives that impact academic staff retention at higher education institutions in Oman?

2) What are the factors leading to academic staff members' resignations at higher education institutions in Oman?

3) Which type of incentive (financial or non-financial) has a greater effect on retention?

4) How do characteristics such as institution type (public or private) and nationality (Omani or non-Omani) impact retention?

## 4.3 Conceptual Framework

In order to answer the above questions, a conceptual framework has been developed (see Figure 1.1 on page 3 that presents the Conceptual Framework). The following three subsections briefly explain the variables used in the conceptual framework of this study.

1. **Independent Variables**

Financial and non-financial incentives represent the independent variables in this study. The financial incentives that are examined relate to salary (e.g., wages, allowances for housing and transport, overtime), fringe benefits (e.g., rewards, pension, conference and training fees, health insurance), and promotion. The non-financial incentives relate to leadership and supervision skills (e.g., quality of supervision, involvement in decision-making), continuing professional development (e.g., opportunities for growth and career advancement, learning and training opportunities), autonomy and work environment (e.g., flexible working hours, relations with colleagues), infrastructure and resources (e.g., appropriate buildings and well-furnished offices, teaching resources), and recognition and appreciation (e.g., certificates, small gifts, expressions of thanks).

2. **Moderator Variables**

The two moderator variables used in this study are the nationality of the academic staff members (whether they are Omanis or expatriates) and the type of HEI (whether it is public or private). As independent variables, their direct effects on retention are also examined.

3. **Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable in this study is academic staff retention. Although retention strategies across different industries have many common features, such as competitive pay, a good working environment, and opportunities for advancement, they need to be context-specific and evidence-based to be effective (Thite, 2010, p.11). In the context of this study, retention strategies should be appropriate for academic staff working in higher education institutions. Retention is usually measured in terms of intention to stay and intention to leave (Ng'ethe, 2013, p.107). Thus, these measures are used in this study to measure academic staff retention.

To summarise the study's conceptual framework, the impact of financial and non-financial incentives on academic staff retention is investigated. The influence of the type of HEI (public/private) and staff members' nationalities (Omani/non-Omani) on the retention of academic staff and on the relationship between the incentives and retention is explored.

## 4.4 Research Philosophy and Paradigm

The philosophy underpinning the design of this study is based on both the positivist and interpretivist paradigms. The positivist paradigm informs this study's use of questionnaires to collect the quantitative data, while the interpretivist paradigm is represented by this study's use of semi-structured interviews to collect the qualitative data. Thus, this study adopts the pragmatist paradigm as its philosophical basis and mixed-methods as its research design.

Research philosophy ‘relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge’ (Saunders et al., 2012, p.127). In fact, this is what we do when we embark on a research project; we develop knowledge in a particular field. Over the years, scientists have worked to develop clear research frameworks, starting with Thomas Kuhn, who introduced the idea of the research paradigm in the early 1960s. According to Kuhn (1962, p.23), a paradigm is not just an accepted model or pattern; it is the way that people look at or research a phenomenon.

Since Kuhn, different approaches to methodology have been developed by different groups of researchers working within different paradigms (Cohen et al., 2011, p.5). Scientists in different fields (e.g., social sciences, business, etc.) created their own schools and classifications based on the assumptions they held. Positivism and interpretivism are the best-known research paradigms. Positivism is concerned with gaining knowledge through observation and experimentation, while interpretivism assumes that knowledge is attained by interpretation and examining humans’ subjective experiences (Cohen et al., 2011). Each paradigm has its advantages and disadvantages; so, in order to overcome the disadvantages of each paradigm and exploit its strengths, scientists came up with a new paradigm that integrates both positivism and interpretivism: the “pragmatist paradigm” (Cohen et al., 2011).

The next section will present more details about the research design and the justification for its selection.

## 4.5 Research Design

A research design is defined by Parahoo (2006, p.183) as the ‘plan that describes how, when, and where data are to be collected and analysed’. The selection of the method used to collect the data is determined by the research purpose and questions (Greene, 2008, p.13; Cohen et al., 2011, p.23). There are three broad types of method: quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods.

Differentiating between these three method types, Creswell (2014, pp.32-40) notes that a quantitative approach is used by positivists to test particular theories by examining the relationships among variables. A qualitative approach is used by constructivists or interpretivists to explore and understand individuals' perspectives or explanations of a particular social or human problem. Combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, a mixed-methods approach is used by pragmatists to provide a more complete understanding of a given research problem than either approach can provide on its own. Conducting this kind of research involves 'collecting, analysing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon' (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2009, p.265).

Pragmatist, or mixed-methods research, has emerged as a result of the paradigm wars between scholars who adopt quantitative methodologies and scholars who favour qualitative methodologies (Cohen et al., 2011, p.21). Pragmatism is the most useful approach for the investigation of a phenomenon, or research problem, as it combines experiments, case studies, surveys, etc., thereby enhancing the quality of the research (Suter, 2005; Cohen et al., 2018, p.36). Adopting a mixed-methods approach yields a richer and more reliable understanding (broader and deeper) of a phenomenon than a single approach can offer (Cohen et al., 2018, p.32).

The choice of methodology is usually determined by the research purpose and questions (Greene, 2008, p.13; Cohen et al., 2011, p.23). Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) suggest that research questions asking 'what? and how?' or 'what? and why?' require both quantitative and qualitative data to answer, and so generally involve a mixed-methods approach. The purpose of the present study is to explore *what* the incentives are that affect the retention of academic staff and *how* these incentives affect retention, as well as asking *what* incentive type (financial or non-financial) most affects retention and *why*. It also aims to explore *how* the institution type (public or private) and the nationality of academic staff members (Omani or non-Omani) influence the relation between the incentives and retention, as well as *how* they affect retention.

To satisfactorily address all of these inquiries, a *broad* understanding of the research problem needed to be reached. This involved conducting a survey to gather data from the largest possible range of academic staff members, including both Omani and non-Omani academic staff members at both private and public HEIs. After that, interviews were used to obtain a *deeper* understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives regarding what types of incentives impact their desires and decisions to remain in or leave their current institutions. Thus, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach, with both quantitative and qualitative methods used to gather the data.

As was mentioned earlier, the mixed-methods research approach emerged as a means of harnessing the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods and of overcoming the disadvantages of each. For the purposes of this study, quantitative methods offered the chance to gather data from a large sample of academic staff. Conducting an online survey made it possible to collect the data more quickly, more easily, and at a lower cost. However, one disadvantage of quantitative methods is that they are inflexible; the researcher cannot ask the participants to explain what they mean by their answers or why they give a particular answer. This shortcoming can be compensated for by incorporating qualitative methods, specifically semi-structured interviews.

The use of mixed-methods research allows a more comprehensive and complete understanding of the phenomena than a single method alone is capable of providing, thereby helping the researcher answer complex research questions (Cohen et al., 2018, p.33). The mixed-methods approach can also yield insights into and explanations of a phenomenon, while offering multiple views of the phenomenon (Creswell and Plano, 2011, p.61), which in turn increases the usefulness and credibility of the results and affords the opportunity for unexpected results to be reached (Cohen et al., 2018, p.33). The use of a mixed-methods approach overcomes the weaknesses and biases of a single method (Denscombe, 2014, p.147). Moreover, the strengths of one method enrich and complement the other method (Morgan, 1998).

Therefore, this study used the explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design, in which quantitative data is collected from a large sample through a survey, followed by semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data in order to better explain and understand the quantitative data. With this design, the use of the qualitative method makes up for the shortcomings of the quantitative method, as the interview questions were based on the respondents' answers to the survey questions, thus allowing the researcher to understand the reasons for the participants' answer choices. In the sequential mixed-methods design, the quantitative and qualitative methods are applied one after the other to collect the data. The resulting data are analysed separately and then put together for comparison and contrasting, in an attempt to identify similarities, differences, and complementarity (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, pp.26, 82-84).

## 4.6 Sampling Design

In this study, three types of non-probability sampling designs are used. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, pp.180-181) indicate that it is common for mixed-methods research to use more than one type of sampling strategy. Thus, a convenience sampling was used when gathering the quantitative data, meaning that data were gathered from available and accessible academic staff members working at higher education institutions in Oman to which the researcher could have an access.

As the aim of this study is not to generalise the results but to explore the perspectives of different groups within Omani HEIs and compare them, the strength of the sample is that it includes a diverse range of respondents, including staff representing different types of institutions (public and private), different nationalities (Omani and non-Omani), different genders, age groups, qualifications, etc. The sample for the quantitative data included 317 academic staff members, 188 of whom work for public HEIs and 129 of whom work for private HEIs. The participants presented a diverse range of characteristics (details are provided in Section 5.2, pages 70-81).

For the purpose of gathering the qualitative data, two types of non-probability sampling were used. As gaining access to the academic staff members was not easy, a volunteer sampling design was used; the researcher relied on participants volunteering to be interviewed by providing their names and contact details upon completing the survey. A total of 35 academic staff members volunteered to be interviewed and provided their contact details. A table containing their demographic data was prepared in order to ensure the sample included participants from both public and private HEIs. The other criteria for selection were age, gender, qualifications, academic ranking, subject specialism, years of teaching experience in their current institution, and position in the institution.

The purpose of the selection criteria was to ensure as broad a range of perspectives as possible by interviewing academic staff members with different demographic characteristics. Subsequently, of the 35 respondents who shared their contact details, 16 academic staff members were selected to be interviewed: eight from public HEIs and eight from private HEIs (details are provided in Section 6.2, pages 109-110). Purposive sampling was used to select the 16 participants from among the 35 people who provided their details. One of the reasons for selecting purposive sampling, according to Teddlie and

Yu (2007), is to enable comparisons to be made, thereby providing greater depth to the study.

## 4.7 Data Collection Instruments

The two instruments used to obtain appropriate data for addressing the study questions are questionnaire (quantitative data) and interviews (qualitative data).

### 4.7.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are widely used to collect data from large samples because they can be cheap, reliable, valid, quick, and easy to complete (Cohen et al., 2018, p.471). For this study, a structured closed questionnaire was employed to collect the quantitative data from the largest possible sample of academic staff members working at public and private HEIs. As Cohen et al. (2018, p.474) state, the rule of thumb for selecting the type of questionnaire to use for data collection is: ‘the larger the size of the sample, the more structured, closed and numerical the questionnaire may have to be, and the smaller the size of the sample, the less structured, more open and word-based the questionnaire can be.’ In addition, data from questionnaires is quicker to code and analyse than word-based data (Bailey, 1994, p.118). However, it can take a lot of time to devise the questionnaire, pilot it, refine it, and set it out in a format that enables the data to be collected and statistics to be calculated. The questionnaire used in this study was mainly adapted from Ng’ethe (2013) and Al-Nsour (2012), supplemented with a few questions modified from Alfandi and AlKhasawneh (2014), Ijaz and Khan (2013), and Weiss et al. (1967) (see Appendix A).

After the survey questions had been prepared, they were validated with the help of five research experts working in Omani HEIs. The questionnaire was later piloted with 10 academic staff members in Omani HEIs, which allowed the researcher to ensure that the questions were clearly understood by the participants and the software used to distribute the survey (Google Forms) was efficient.

The survey was initially distributed to academic staff working in two HEIs, one public and one private. Due to the low response rate and other constraints, the survey was subsequently redistributed via WhatsApp and through the HEIs’ official email platforms.

Thus, the final sample obtained represents the number of responses that the researcher was able to gather after persistent efforts to obtain the greatest number of responses. As the purpose of the study is to compare the public and private sectors as a whole (rather than to compare individual institutions), all of the responses were considered, regardless of how many were received from the academic staff members of each institution.

An online survey was used to gather data from a wide sample of academic staff members representing different demographic characteristics, which is crucial to differentiating between the various sub-groups. The survey was conducted online so as to reach academic staff members in HEIs located in all regions of Oman and to save time and effort in contacting them; as the HEIs are located in various regions of the country, reaching all of them in person would not have been an easy task. A total of 326 survey responses were received, with nine excluded (six of these respondents were not academic staff, one was an expatriate working in another country, and two provided duplicate responses). Ultimately, 317 responses from 27 Omani HEIs were considered (see Table 5.1 on page 72).

It took eight months to collect the questionnaire responses due to the low response rates, which meant the researcher was required to make persistent efforts and resend the questionnaire several times. During those eight months, there was a summer holiday, which also affected the response rate.

### 4.7.2 Interviews

To gather the qualitative data, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with academic staff members. The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that ‘the topics and questions are given, but the questions are open-ended and the wording and sequence [of the questions] may be tailored to each individual interviewee and the responses given, with prompts and probes’ (Cohen et al., 2018, p.511). The researcher selected face-to-face interviews because they offer the opportunity to notice the gestures and facial expressions of the interviewees, thus providing a deeper understanding of the participants’ views. The interview questions were drawn from the survey questions based on the participants’ responses, with the aim being to gain a deeper understanding of their views and obtain further explanations of their perspectives on the incentive- and retention-related issues (see Appendix B). The interview questions were validated by the researcher’s two supervisors in addition to two experts working in Omani HEIs. The interview was piloted with an academic staff member of an Omani HEI.

A total of 35 academic staff members volunteered to be interviewed and provided their contact details after completing the questionnaire. Of the 35 participants, 16 academic staff members working in six HEIs were selected to be interviewed (more details about the sample and the participants' characteristics are provided on pages 60 and 109-110). The interviews were conducted in one of two languages, according to each participant's preference. Ultimately, 12 interviews were conducted in English and four in Arabic. The interviews were audio-recorded and the participants' consent was obtained prior to the interviews.

It took four months to gather the qualitative data by conducting interviews with academic staff members. During these four months, there was an end-of-semester examination, followed by a holiday between the two semesters, both of which affected the length of time it took to conduct the interviews.

## 4.8 Ethical Considerations

It is essential to give careful consideration to ethical issues during all research phases. The main ethical issues that the researcher needs to consider are informed consent, voluntary participation, avoidance of harm, confidentiality and anonymity, and integrity and objectivity (Saunders et al., 2012, p.236). Saunders et al. (2012, p.208) also stress that ethical concerns are greatest where the research involves human participants, irrespective of whether the research is conducted person-to-person, via the Internet, or with questionnaire-based methods. In this study, the researcher endeavoured to consider the aforementioned ethical issues at all times while carrying out the research.

Universities also play a critical role in assuring research ethics by developing ethical guidelines for researchers to follow when developing their research projects (Saunders et al., 2012, p.208). In order to obtain ethical approval from the University of Glasgow to collect the data needed for this study, an application form was completed that addressed the main ethical issues together with a detailed explanation of how these issues would be dealt with. The ethical issues addressed in the form comprised details of the research and a justification for conducting it, methods of data collection and a justification for using these particular methods, how the sample would be selected, how confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained, how research data and participants' personal data would be stored and disposed of, method of results dissemination, and potential risk assessment.

The researcher was also required to obtain the University of Glasgow's Ethics Committee's approval of the Participant Information Sheet. This sheet is provided to participants in order to explain the research and invite their participation. It was also necessary to obtain the committee's approval of the Informed Consent Form, which ensures the participants' awareness of the consequences of taking part in the study and requests their consent to participate. Of course, research ethics involves much more than just completing an ethics application; the aim is to ensure that the research will be undertaken in a way that does not cause any harm to the relevant parties and to determine how one interprets the information and communicates the results (Polonsky and Waller, 2014, p.85).

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Glasgow and the relevant institutions in Oman before commencing the data collection. Due to the low level of responses that the researcher initially received, the plan was changed to include more institutions and distribute the questionnaire widely through other channels such as WhatsApp. This change required an amendment to the original ethical approval from the University of Glasgow (see Appendix C). Approval was also requested from the Omani HEIs that were invited to take part in this study. Some institutions replied with written approval while some directly distributed the questionnaire to their academic staff through their official email platforms, which was taken as approval from those institutions. Some participants received the questionnaire via WhatsApp and decided to take part in the study. The return of each completed survey was considered to be consent from that particular participant. At the beginning of the survey, the participants were provided with all of the necessary information about the researcher and the study.

Participants who volunteered to be interviewed provided their names and contact details at the end of the survey. The participants were given a full explanation of the study together with a participant information sheet that contained all of the relevant details (Appendix C). The participants were made aware that the interviews would be audio-recorded. It was made clear to everyone that participation was voluntary and could be terminated by them at any time without an explanation. The participants were also assured that their decisions on whether to take part in the study would not affect their jobs. The confidentiality and anonymity of everything relating to the participants, the information they provide, and the institutions they worked for were guaranteed. Subsequently, all the volunteers who decided to participate in the study signed an informed consent sheet before being interviewed (Appendix C).

All the consent forms and any relevant materials, including the recording device, were kept in a safe and locked place. Any electronic files that contained the participants' real identities were saved on an encoded, password-protected computer. In addition, all of the institutions and participants were assigned codes to keep their identities confidential, and the researcher referred to those codes throughout the research. The researcher did not spare any effort to avoid causing harm to participants during the data collection phase or when analysing and writing up the results. Endeavours were made to maintain integrity and objectivity at all stages and in analysing and writing up the findings by attempting to include as many of the participants' views, experiences, concerns, and needs.

## 4.9 In-The-Middle Researcher

The researcher positions herself as an in-the-middle (neither insider nor outsider) researcher. The researcher was not one of the academic staff members and she did not work at any of the HEIs; thus, she was not an insider researcher. At the same time, considering her job in the Ministry of Higher Education and her general familiarity with the research context and with the higher education system in Oman, she was not entirely outside the research context, either. When researchers have this kind of familiarity with the research topic, they can never be complete outsiders; nevertheless, their status as researchers prohibits them from being complete insiders (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009).

Being an in-the-middle researcher had positive and negative aspects. One of the advantages was that this position, to some extent, mitigated against issues of subjectivity or the likelihood of inadvertently making erroneous assumptions when interviewing the participants and analysing the interviews; such issues may have arisen had the researcher had specific prior knowledge or experience. In this study, the survey questions were adapted from other studies and the interview questions were based on the participants' answers to the survey questions. This meant that they were not mainly based on the researcher's personal assumptions or structured by the researcher's own experience, which might have presented an issue had the researcher been an insider. However, there were still a few questions that were adapted or constructed to be in line with the Omani context.

One drawback of being an insider researcher is the struggle required to separate one’s simultaneous roles as a group member and a researcher (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007; Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009), which might also affect the researcher’s objectivity. Hellawell (2006) states that it is often considered positive to be an outsider within research, as outsiders are able to be more objective and critically view any given situation. The researcher benefited to some extent from this advantage, even though she was not a complete outsider. In addition, despite being a non-insider, the researcher’s position in the Ministry facilitated her mission and she enjoyed significant advantages similar to those available to an insider researcher. For instance, the distribution of the questionnaire to institutions under the supervision of the Ministry was carried out with the support of the relevant directorates in the Ministry.

On the other hand, there are also certain benefits of being an insider researcher that might not be enjoyed by a non-insider. One such insider advantage is the researcher’s familiarity with a group’s language or norms (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007). This familiarity may also lead to the researcher being more accepted by participants (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Berger, 2015). In the case of this study, the researcher was generally familiar with the higher education system in Oman as well as with the compensation system and the regulations at some HEIs. However, there were certain norms that the researcher could not understand; but the use of semi-structured interviews facilitated the task of obtaining clarifications when needed. According to Asselin (2003), even if researchers are considered insiders, they should approach research as if they know nothing about the topic.

Another challenge for researchers who may be considered outsiders in relation to their target research population is that they may have trouble accessing participants as they have not built up a rapport with them (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007). This is an issue that made it a little harder for the researcher to access participants than it might have been for an insider researcher. However, the difficulty of obtaining relevant data and census information was greater than the difficulty of accessing participants. Indeed, many institutions and participants were very cooperative, which allowed a convenient sample size to be obtained, whereas some data and census information could not be obtained at all, especially when considered sensitive by some of the HEIs.

The researcher adopted certain specific measures to reduce the risk of biases. First, the researcher employed a mixed-methods (quantitative and qualitative) approach. Second, the questionnaire was distributed to all of the HEIs that the researcher could reach. Third, the interviewees consisted of volunteers who had provided their names and contact details after completing the survey, and the researcher’s position had nothing to do with the participants’ decisions. The second phase involved selecting from among the volunteers. The selection criteria were designed to ensure as broad a range of perspectives as possible by interviewing academic staff members with different demographic characteristics. Fourth, when inviting participants via email or WhatsApp message to participate in the data-collection phase, the researcher emphasised her role as researcher, and not as Ministry of Higher Education staff member. As the nature of the researcher’s job at the Ministry does not entail direct contact with academic staff, most of the participants did not know where she worked. When some participants asked about her place of work, the researcher informed them and assured them that their identities would not be shared with the Ministry and that any information provided would be anonymised. Fifth, all participants were assured that the data would remain confidential and that anonymity would be maintained. Sixth, participants were informed how the study data would be used and with whom the data would be shared. Seventh, participants were assured that none of the information they provided would affect their jobs. Finally, when writing the thesis, the researcher did her best to include as many of the participants’ views, concerns, and aspirations as she could in an attempt to maintain objectivity and avoid potential biases.

It can be said that the researcher’s in-the-middle position (neither insider nor outsider) facilitated her task on many occasions during the research phases. This was especially the case given that the research covered more than one HEI, and had the researcher been working at one of them, it might have been difficult to gain the trust of the officials and staff members at other HEIs, as they might have been hesitant to share their data with rivals. Thus, being an insider at one of the HEIs may have harmed the research rather than adding value to it. Therefore, being in-the-middle might have been a useful position for conducting this study.

## 4.10 Analysis of Data

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods. A very brief overview of the quantitative data analysis will be presented in this section, and a more detailed analysis will be provided in Chapter 5. The data gathered through the questionnaire were coded and entered into the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26 software in order to carry out the analysis. The data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics include frequency tables and charts; means were used to present the demographic data and to describe, interpret, and compare the participants' responses regarding each of the financial and non-financial incentives (the independent variables). Inferential statistics such as correlation and regression were used to investigate the relationship between the incentives (the independent variables) and academic staff retention (the dependent variable).

Qualitative data were gathered using interviews, with each participant able to choose the language of their interview. Ultimately, 12 interviews were conducted in English and four in Arabic. All of the interviews were transcribed in English, a process which involved translating the four that were conducted in Arabic. After the transcriptions were complete, the data were transferred from Microsoft Word to NVivo 12. In NVivo, the data were organised by creating files for the participants and adding all of the classifications that might help in analysing the data, such as institution type (public or private), nationality (Omani or non-Omani), gender, age group, etc.

Subsequently, the transcriptions were read several times by the researcher and nodes were created for coding the data. During the coding phase, the data were categorised and themes were identified. The themes were created based on the questions that had been asked during the interviews, with the participants' answers sorted into those themes accordingly. The themes included reasons for choosing the current institution, intention to stay or leave, reasons for staying in the institution, and reasons that might lead to leaving the institution. Sub-themes were also created to represent the reasons for staying in or leaving the institution. Sub-themes included factors like salary, fringe benefits, promotion, leadership and supervision skills, and many others (see Appendix D).

When analysing and writing up the qualitative findings in Chapter 6, sub-themes that were found to be similar and could be categorised under the same theme were grouped together.

For instance, workload and student good behaviour were grouped with autonomy and work environment. In addition, geographic location of the institution and staff members' family commitments were grouped together with stability. As equity was a theme found in relation to most of the factors, it was discussed under each particular factor. The organisation of the qualitative data, the themes and sub-themes created using NVivo, and the notes made after each interview regarding the participants' gestures and facial expressions all enabled the researcher to write up the qualitative findings.

## 4.11 Summary

This chapter has discussed all of the issues related to methodology. The pragmatist paradigm, which combines the positivist and interpretivist paradigms, was adopted as the philosophy of this study, and the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was used to gather the data. The quantitative data were gathered using a structured closed questionnaire, while the qualitative data were gathered by conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews. A total of 317 survey responses from academic staff members working in Omani HEIs were considered for this study, in addition to 16 interviews with the academic staff members.

# Chapter 5: Quantitative Data Analysis and Results

## 5.1 Introduction

Having discussed the methodology and research design, this chapter will now explain the quantitative data analysis and its results. The chapter first presents the demographic data relating to the academic staff members who participated in the survey, followed by the descriptive and inferential statistics that were used to analyse the quantitative data and the results that were generated.

## 5.2 Sample

This study's target sample comprises academic staff working in Omani public and private higher education institutions. A total of 326 survey responses were received, with nine excluded (six of these respondents were not academic staff, one was an expatriate working in another country, and two provided duplicate responses). Ultimately, 317 responses from 27 Omani HEIs were considered (see Table 5.1).

Knowing the demographic characteristics of the sample is crucial in order to differentiate between the various sub-groups (Al-Maqbali, 2017, p.149). The following section considers the participants' different characteristics, such as their nationality, gender, age, level of education, and academic ranking. These characteristics are grouped into three categories: institutional characteristics, personal characteristics, and professional characteristics.

### 5.2.1 Institutional Characteristics

As one of the main objectives of this study is to compare public and private HEIs, it is essential to differentiate between participants working for public institutions and those working for private ones. Of the 317 respondents, 188 worked for public HEIs and 129 worked for private HEIs. Figure 5.1 shows the percentage distribution of participants among public and private HEIs.

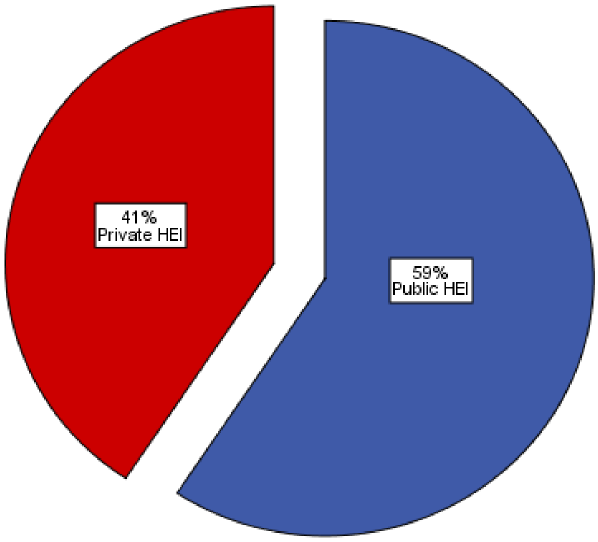


**Figure 5.1: Response by Institution Type**

The survey was initially distributed to academic staff working in two HEIs, one public and one private. Due to the low response rate and other constraints, which were explained in detail in Section 4.8 on page 63, the survey was subsequently redistributed via WhatsApp and through the HEIs' official email platforms. Thus, the sample described in Table 5.1 represents the number of responses that the researcher was able to gather after persistent efforts to obtain the greatest number of responses. As the purpose of the study is to compare the public and private higher education sectors as a whole (rather than to compare the individual institutions), all of the responses were considered regardless of how many were received from academic staff members of each institution. To maintain confidentiality, the institutions are referred to as HEI1, HEI2, etc.

It should be mentioned that the interview participants were selected based on their survey responses. The academic staff who were willing to participate in interviews provided their names and contact details at the end of the survey forms. 16 interviews were conducted with academic staff: eight from public HEIs and eight from private HEIs (more details are given on pages 60 and 109-110).

**Table 5.1: Distribution of Sample Among HEIs**

| Institution Type | HEI | Survey Sample | Interview Sample |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Public** | HEI1 | 13 | 2 |
| | HEI2 | 8 | |
| | HEI3 | 7 | |
| | HEI4 | 11 | |
| | HEI5 | 4 | |
| | HEI6 | 4 | |
| | HEI7 | 114 | 6 |
| | HEI8 | 20 | |
| | HEI9 | 1 | |
| | HEI10 | 1 | |
| | HEI11 | 2 | |
| | HEI12 | 1 | |
| | HEI13 | 2 | |
| **Private** | HEI14 | 10 | |
| | HEI15 | 58 | 4 |
| | HEI16 | 16 | |
| | HEI17 | 3 | 1 |
| | HEI18 | 18 | 2 |
| | HEI19 | 8 | |
| | HEI20 | 6 | |
| | HEI21 | 1 | |
| | HEI22 | 2 | |
| | HEI23 | 1 | |
| | HEI24 | 1 | |
| | HEI25 | 1 | |
| | HEI26 | 1 | |
| | HEI27 | 3 | 1 |
| **Total** | | **317** | **16** |

## 5.2.2 Personal Characteristics

This section will examine the respondents' personal characteristics, including their nationality, gender, age, and level of education.

### 1. Nationality of Respondents

The study included Omani and non-Omani academic staff who worked for public and private HEIs in Oman. Figure 5.2 shows that 42.9% of the participants are Omani academics, while 57.1% are expatriates.

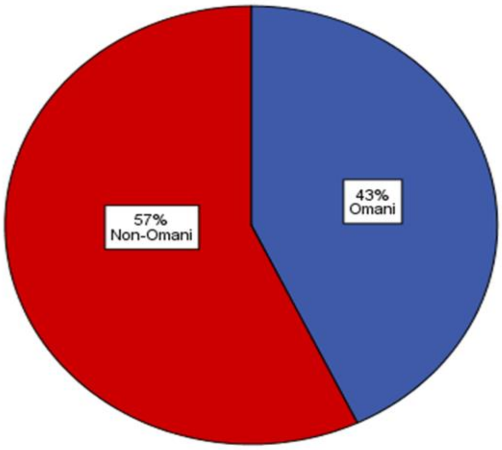


**Figure 5.2: Nationality of Respondents**

Oman's higher education sector is still dependent on expatriates, especially in the private sector; according to the administrators of some institutions, qualified Omanis prefer not to work in private HEIs for a number of reasons, notably the low salaries and other financial incentives, as well as the lack of opportunities for professional development (e.g. scholarships). It can be seen from Table 5.2 that the majority of the academic staff at private institutions who participated in the survey were non-Omani (86%). Statistics issued by Higher Education Admission Centre (HEAC) in 2016 reveal that private institutions depend on expatriates from certain countries, with India providing the most (41.1% of expatriates), followed by Pakistan (7.1%) (Alroya, 2016).

**Table 5.2: Nationality of Respondents Distributed by Institution Type**

| | | | Institution Type | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Public HEI | Private HEI | Total |
| Nationality | Omani | Count | 118 | 18 | 136 |
| | | % within Institution Type | 62.8% | 14.0% | 42.9% |
| | Non-Omani | Count | 70 | 111 | 181 |
| | | % within Institution Type | 37.2% | 86.0% | 57.1% |
| Total | | Count | 188 | 129 | 317 |
| | | % within Institution Type | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

### 2. Gender of Respondents

Of the 317 respondents, 183 are male and 134 are female; 57.7% and 42.3% respectively (see Table 5.3). The difference in the gender distribution of respondents is not large, which reflects the situation in Oman, where there is no obvious dominance of a particular gender in HEIs.

**Table 5.3: Gender of Respondents**

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 183 | 57.7 |
| Female | 134 | 42.3 |
| Total | 317 | 100.0 |

### 3. Age of Respondents

Table 5.4 shows that the respondents were distributed across several age groups, ranging from 25-29 years old at the lower limit to 55 and above. The majority (73.2%) of the respondents were between 30 and 49. The age group that is most represented is 40-44 (accounting for 24% of responses), followed by 35-39 (accounting for 18.6%). The reason for the higher representations of these age groups is that at this point of their careers, academic staff may be more ambitious and more willing to improve (Al-Maqbali, 2017, p.150). The least represented group was the 25-29 age range, which accounted for just 5.4% of all responses. This might be because the number of academics within this age group is low compared to other age groups.

**Table 5.4: Age of Respondents**

| Age Group (in years) | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 25 - 29 | 17 | 5.4 |
| 30 - 34 | 50 | 15.8 |
| 35 - 39 | 59 | 18.6 |
| 40 - 44 | 76 | 24.0 |
| 45 - 49 | 47 | 14.8 |
| 50 - 54 | 34 | 10.7 |
| 55 and above | 34 | 10.7 |
| Total | 317 | 100.0 |

**4. Level of Education of Respondents**

The academic qualifications possessed by the sample range from bachelor's degree to doctorate. Bachelor's degree holders represent 1.9% of the sample, master's degree holders constitute 36.6%, board certification holders account for 1.9% (this will be explained below), and doctorate holders make up 59.6% (see Table 5.5). Thus, the majority of the respondents possessed doctorates. HEIs in Oman, especially public ones, are seeking to ensure that their academic staff continue their studies and earn PhDs. Therefore, there are scholarship programmes set up in many public HEIs to fund the PhD studies of their Omani academics.

Board certification refers to physicians who hold a medical doctorate (M.D.), which is equivalent to a Bachelor of Medicine or Bachelor of Surgery in the United Kingdom. Those physicians were sponsored by the government of Oman to study abroad in Western countries (e.g. the UK, France, USA, Canada, etc.) for a period of 5 to 7 years to obtain a well-recognised board certification through fellowship programmes. The majority of them work as clinicians in teaching hospitals in addition to their academic or clinical affiliation with a college of medicine, in which they teach and supervise medical students and residents.

**Table 5.5: Level of Education**

| Level of Education | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Bachelor's degree | 6 | 1.9 |
| Master's degree | 116 | 36.6 |
| Board certification | 6 | 1.9 |
| Doctorate | 189 | 59.6 |
| Total | 317 | 100.0 |

## 5.2.3 Professional Characteristics

The participants' professional characteristics include type of appointment, academic ranking, total years of experience, teaching experience in their current institution, leadership position, specialty, and teaching hours per week. Each of these characteristics will be examined in this subsection.

**1. Type of Appointment of Respondents**

The participants were asked in the questionnaire whether their appointment in their institution was permanent, contractual full-time, or contractual part-time. Table 5.6 shows that the majority (57.7%) were appointed on a full-time contractual basis, followed by permanent appointment (41.7%), with only 0.6% being on part-time contracts. As 57% of the sample consists of non-Omanis (see Section 5.2.2), the percentage of academics appointed on a contractual basis is reasonable given that all expatriates have this type of contract, whereas the majority of Omani academics are appointed permanently.

**Table 5.6: Type of Appointment**

| Type of Appointment | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Permanent | 132 | 41.7 |
| Contractual Full-time | 183 | 57.7 |
| Contractual Part-time | 2 | 0.6 |
| Total | 317 | 100.0 |

**2. Academic Ranking of Respondents**

This study covers public and private HEIs, and each institution has its own academic classifications for its staff; in other words, different types of academic ranking are used. Moreover, it has been found that in some cases, there is more than one academic classification within a single institution; for example, one for foundation programme instructors and one for academics working in other colleges or departments. Therefore, Table 5.7 presents many types of academic ranking for the respondents. ‘Assistant professor’, ‘lecturer’, and ‘associate professor’ represented the highest rates of responses, accounting for 35.3%, 28.1% and 13.7% of the total, respectively.

It is worth mentioning that there is no single uniform structure of academic hierarchy in Oman. This means that a lecturer with a master’s degree in one institution might be equivalent to an instructor with a master’s degree in another institution, or even in the same institution but in different departments. Similarly, an assistant lecturer who possesses a PhD in one institution might be equivalent to an assistant professor in a different institutional context.

However, there are some job titles that are more universal. These can be found in the academic hierarchies of many institutions, which use the same job titles to refer to people with similar qualifications and/or teaching and researching experience. These jobs include demonstrator, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. Demonstrator is the title given in some institutions to Omani academics with a bachelor's degree and no experience when they are first appointed. This title might not be found in many institutions because they prefer to appoint academics with teaching experience or higher degrees.

Assistant professors are those academics with PhDs, while associate professors also require a certain number of years of teaching and researching experience, as specified by the institution. The title of assistant professor is analogous to lecturer in the UK and assistant professor in the US. On the other hand, associate professor is analogous to senior lecturer or reader in some universities or associate professor in other universities in the UK, and equivalent to associate professor in the US (Barton, 2019, pp.8-9). The title of professor is granted to those academics with PhDs and long years of experience teaching and conducting research, as specified by the institution. This is the most senior academic position in Oman, just as it is in the UK and the US. The number of professors in Oman is extremely low.

Finally, 'Other' indicates non-academic positions such as senior consultant, consultant, biomedical scientist, head of department, technician, or technician of medical physics. Most of these posts are held by academic staff who teach part-time.

**Table 5.7: Types of Academic Ranking**

| Academic Ranking | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Demonstrator | 2 | 0.6 |
| Instructor | 28 | 8.8 |
| Senior Instructor | 14 | 4.4 |
| Assistant Lecturer | 8 | 2.5 |
| Lecturer | 89 | 28.1 |
| Assistant Language Lecturer | 1 | 0.3 |
| Assistant Professor | 112 | 35.3 |
| Associate Professor | 43 | 13.7 |
| Professor | 11 | 3.5 |
| Other | 9 | 2.8 |
| Total | 317 | 100.0 |

### 3. Respondents' Total Years of Experience

Table 5.8 illustrates the respondents' total years of work experience, both within their current institutions and elsewhere. 156 (49.1%) of the 317 respondents have more than 15 years' total experience. The number of respondents with 5-10 years and 11-15 years of experience is similar, 68 (21.5%) and 62 (19.6%), respectively. 10% of the respondents had less than five years of experience, while 90% had more than five years, which indicates that the majority of the respondents were well experienced, either solely in academia or in academia combined with other professions.

**Table 5.8: Total Years of Work Experience**

| Total Work Experience | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Less than a year | 8 | 2.5 |
| 1 – 4 years | 23 | 7.3 |
| 5 – 10 years | 68 | 21.5 |
| 11 – 15 years | 62 | 19.6 |
| More than 15 years | 156 | 49.1 |
| Total | 317 | 100.0 |

### 4. Respondents' Teaching Experience in Their Current Institutions

Table 5.9 shows that a significant number of respondents – 123 (38.8%) of the 317 – had been teaching in their current institution for 5-10 years, followed by 77 (24.3%) respondents who had been working there for 1-4 years. 30.6% had been working at their current HEI for more than 10 years. The figures show that most of the respondents had been working in the same institution for a long enough period to have developed an informed evaluation of the situation.

**Table 5.9: Number of Years in Current Institution**

| Time in Current Institution | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Less than a year | 20 | 6.3 |
| 1 – 4 years | 77 | 24.3 |
| 5 – 10 years | 123 | 38.8 |
| 11 – 15 years | 48 | 15.1 |
| More than 15 years | 49 | 15.5 |
| Total | 317 | 100.0 |

**5. Respondents' Leadership Positions**

The participants were asked in the questionnaire whether they held any leadership positions. The purpose of this question was to investigate whether their answers to the survey's questions might have been influenced by their own leadership roles. The leadership positions were classified according to level. High-level positions include dean, assistant dean, head of department/section, director, deputy director, and deputy head of department. Mid-level positions include programme coordinator and programme director. Low-level positions include course leader, coordinator, skill leader, examination coordinator, examination committee chairperson, head of unit, and head of quality assurance faculty committee. Table 5.10 shows that 223 (70.3%) respondents did not hold a leadership position. This is a reasonable percentage as it is normal not to have many leadership positions in an institution. The remaining 29.7% comprised academics with leadership positions, distributed as follows: 66 (20.8%) held high-level leadership positions, 11 (3.5%) held mid-level leadership positions, and 17 (5.4%) held low-level leadership positions.

**Table 5.10: Level of Leadership**

| Level of Leadership | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| No Position | 223 | 70.3 |
| Low-Level | 17 | 5.4 |
| Mid-Level | 11 | 3.5 |
| High-Level | 66 | 20.8 |
| Total | 317 | 100.0 |

**6. Speciality of Respondents**

Table 5.11 illustrates the specialisations the participants taught. Large HEIs have different colleges for various specialisations, while small HEIs might only have a few departments. 117 (36.9%) of the 317 participants were teaching arts and social sciences, which represents the highest proportion, followed by 79 (24.9%) who were teaching business studies and information technology. The remaining specialities were represented in similar proportions: 39 (12.3%) for medicine and health science, 32 (10.1%) for science, and 32 (10.1%) for engineering. The 18 (5.7%) participants who did not disclose their specialities are referred to as ‘unknown’. Most HEIs in Oman include colleges or departments for arts and social sciences, and business studies and information technology. Therefore, it is not surprising that these specialisations dominated the responses.

**Table 5.11: Speciality of Respondents**

| Speciality | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Medicine and Health Science | 39 | 12.3 |
| Science | 32 | 10.1 |
| Arts and Social Sciences | 117 | 36.9 |
| Engineering | 32 | 10.1 |
| Business Studies and Information Technology | 79 | 24.9 |
| Unknown | 18 | 5.7 |
| Total | 317 | 100.0 |

### 7. Respondents’ Weekly Teaching Hours

Weekly teaching hours differ from one institution to another. However, HEIs within the same institution type (public or private) have similar numbers of weekly teaching hours. Table 5.12 shows that 146 participants (46.1%) taught 13-20 hours per week and 132 participants (41.6%) taught 5-12 hours per week. Those numbers represent the majority of respondents and indicate that the most likely reality is that most academics teach for those numbers of hours. Few academic staff members taught more than 20 hours a week; they accounted for just 6.6% of the total respondents (21 participants). Such high teaching loads mostly occur when there is a shortage of academic staff, especially in private HEIs. 18 participants (5.7%) taught four hours per week or less. Normally, institutions reduce the teaching hours of those academic staff members who hold leadership positions.

**Table 5.12: Number of Teaching Hours/Week**

| Teaching Hours/Week | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 4 or less | 18 | 5.7 |
| 5 - 12 | 132 | 41.6 |
| 13 - 20 | 146 | 46.1 |
| More than 20 | 21 | 6.6 |
| Total | 317 | 100.0 |

As the objective of this study is not to infer about the population but to compare different groups within Omani higher education, the strength of the sample lies in the fact that it comprises a diverse range of respondents, including staff from different types of institutions (public and private), nationality (Omani and non-Omani), gender, age groups, qualifications, etc.

## 5.3 Descriptive Statistics

The two main branches of statistics are descriptive and inferential. The first branch, descriptive statistics, describes the data and then enables the researcher to analyse and interpret the meaning of these descriptions (Cohen et al., 2018, p.753). Inferential statistics use a random sample taken from a population to make inferences about that population (Cohen et al., 2018, p.776).

### 5.3.1 Findings on Academic Staff Retention

The dependent variable in this study is academic staff retention. This subsection will explain the measures used for quantifying staff retention. The ratings of independent variables relating to academics' decisions to leave a position and the period for which the academic staff members intended to stay in their current institutions will be presented here.

1. **Measuring Academic Staff Retention**

Intention to stay and intention to leave are two variables that can be used to measure academic staff retention (Ng'ethe, 2013, p.100). The researcher asked eight questions relating to the academic staff's intentions to stay or leave, with the respondents providing answers on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. To facilitate analysis and understanding of the results, the answers 'strongly agree' and 'agree' were aggregated, as were 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree'. The findings for these questions are presented in Table 5.13 below. In these results, the researcher omits missing values and only reports the 'valid percent' of participants' answers. 'Not applicable' answers were considered missing values in this study and they were treated using SPSS.

Table 5.13 reveals that a significant percentage of the respondents (52.7%) indicated that they planned to remain in their present jobs for as long as possible; hence, they can be said to have had intention to stay. 57.9% pointed out that if they wanted to perform another job or function, they would look first at the possibilities within their present institutions. 45.2% indicated that they would hate to quit their current job. However, although some respondents would hate to quit their current job, this does not mean that they would not leave it if they were offered a better job, as the next paragraph will show. This is also demonstrated by the high percentage of academics (43.2%) who intended to leave their current institution in the short term (see Table 5.15).

**Table 5.13: Measures of Academic Staff Retention**

| Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| **1- I plan to work at my present job for as long as possible** | 8.8 | 17.0 | 21.5 | 29.4 | 23.3 | 100.0 |
| **2- I am actively searching for an alternative to this institution** | 18.8 | 28.8 | 25.9 | 15.2 | 11.3 | 100.0 |
| **3- I would hate to quit this job** | 8.0 | 14.0 | 32.8 | 26.1 | 19.1 | 100.0 |
| **4- As soon as possible, I will leave this institution** | 21.7 | 34.2 | 24.9 | 11.2 | 8.0 | 100.0 |
| **5- I am in this institution for lack of an alternative employer** | 24.3 | 29.4 | 24.3 | 10.9 | 11.1 | 100.0 |
| **6- If I wanted to do another job or function, I would look first at the possibilities within this institution** | 9.8 | 13.7 | 18.6 | 40.5 | 17.4 | 100.0 |
| **7- It does not matter if I am working for this institution or another, as long as I have work** | 19.7 | 33.2 | 29.4 | 11.9 | 5.8 | 100.0 |
| **8- If I received an attractive job offer from another institution/organisation, I would take the job** | 8.6 | 12.2 | 28.0 | 24.0 | 27.2 | 100.0 |

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

With regard to intention to leave, it can be seen from Table 5.13 that 26.5% stated that they were actively searching for an alternative to their current institution, and hence they can be said to have had intention to leave. This percentage is relatively small compared to the 47.6% of respondents who were not actively searching for an alternative to their current institutions. Similarly, a relatively small percentage (19.2%) responded that they would leave their institution as soon as possible. 22.0% mentioned that they were in their current institutions for lack of alternatives, which means that they would have had the intention to leave if they had received the opportunity. This can be seen clearly from the respondents' answers when they were asked whether they would take the job if they received an attractive offer from another institution/organisation. A significant percentage (51.2%) indicated that they would take the job.

## 2. Rating the Importance of Independent Variables in Deciding to Leave

The participants were asked to rank the importance of various incentives in their decisions/desires to leave their current institutions in order to accept a position in another institution or outside of academia. The ranking ranged from 1 = not important at all to 4 = very important. Most of the incentives were rated as 'very important' factors in the decision to leave (above 50%). From Table 5.14, it is evident that working conditions (63.1%), recognition and appreciation (58%), salary (56.5%), promotion (53.6%), and continuous professional development (52.7%) were considered significantly important. The factors of leadership and supervision skills and fringe benefits were rated lower than the other factors (44.8% and 36.6%, respectively), but they were still deemed 'important' factors by a significant percentage of the sample: 41.6% and 46.4%, respectively.

In general, the proportion of participants rating factors 'important' were similar, with fringe benefits deemed 'important' by the largest amount (46.4%) and working conditions considered 'important' by the smallest percentage (34.4%). It can be seen from Table 5.14 that when factors were rated 'very important' by a significant percentage of participants, they were rated 'important' by a lower percentage, and vice versa. For example, working conditions, recognition and appreciation, and salary were chosen as 'very important' factors by 63.1%, 58% and 56.5% of respondents, respectively, while they were rated 'important' by 34.4%, 36.3% and 36%.

Similarly, factors like fringe benefits, leadership and supervision skills, and continuous professional development were rated 'very important' by fewer participants than other factors (36.6%, 44.8% and 52.7%, respectively), but were rated by higher percentages as 'important': 46.4%, 41.6% and 42.9%. This is not surprising, as adding up the 'important' and 'very important' responses for many of the factors brings the total near 100%, indicating that the factor is considered generally important; for example, working conditions was rated ‘important’ by 34.4% and ‘very important’ by 63.1%, totalling 97.5%.

The participants considered some factors to be ‘of little importance’ in their decisions/desires to leave their current HEI. 15.1% and 12.6% of participants indicated that fringe benefits and leadership and supervision skills were ‘of little importance’ in their decisions to leave. Those were the highest percentages, while the lowest was 1.9%, for working conditions.

Few respondents deemed any of the factors to be ‘not important at all’. These small percentages range from 2.2% for promotion to 0.6% for continuous professional development, working conditions, and recognition and appreciation.

**Table 5.14: Rating of the Importance of Independent Variables in Decisions to Leave**

| Factor | Not important at all | Of little importance | Important | Very important | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| **Salary** | 1.2 | 6.3 | 36.0 | 56.5 | 100.0 |
| **Fringe Benefits** | 1.9 | 15.1 | 46.4 | 36.6 | 100.0 |
| **Promotion** | 2.2 | 7.9 | 36.3 | 53.6 | 100.0 |
| **Leadership and Supervision Skills** | 1.0 | 12.6 | 41.6 | 44.8 | 100.0 |
| **Continuous Professional Development** | 0.6 | 3.8 | 42.9 | 52.7 | 100.0 |
| **Working Conditions** | 0.6 | 1.9 | 34.4 | 63.1 | 100.0 |
| **Recognition and Appreciation** | 0.6 | 5.1 | 36.3 | 58.0 | 100.0 |

### 3. Intended Period of Stay at Current Institution

Table 5.15 illustrates the period respondents intended to stay at their current institutions. The largest number of respondents – 43.2% (137 out of 317) – indicated that they intended to stay for a short-term period, meaning no longer than five years. This is clear evidence that a significant number of academic staff had the intention to leave in the near future. Moreover, out of the 137 respondents, a significant number said that they would leave their institution as soon as possible or once they found another job. This aligns with the findings of Ng’ethe (2013) and Adenike (2011), who report that a substantial number of universities’ academic staff leave their universities during the first five years of their employment. This should be of great concern to universities due to the potential negative consequences for service delivery and teaching quality. 18.9% of the respondents intended to stay for a medium-term period (5-10 years) and 25.9% intended to stay for a long period (more than 10 years). 12% of the participants did not know or did not specify how many years they would stay at their institution. Some of the expatriates did not know how long they would stay because they were not sure when their employer would terminate their contracts or for how long their contract would be renewed.

**Table 5.15: Intended Period of Stay at Current Institution**

| Period | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Short-term | 137 | 43.2 |
| Medium-term | 60 | 18.9 |
| Long-term | 82 | 25.9 |
| Unknown | 38 | 12.0 |
| Total | 317 | 100.0 |

## 5.3.2 Independent Variables

The drivers of academic staff retention were divided into financial and non-financial incentives. Financial incentives include salary, fringe benefits, and promotion. Non-financial incentives include leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, working conditions (autonomy and work environment, and infrastructure and resources), and recognition and appreciation. The researcher used a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

### *Financial Incentives*

The participants' responses regarding each financial incentive type – salary, fringe benefits, and promotion – are discussed in this section.

### ***Salary***

Salary was measured based on adequacy, attractiveness, regularity, and equity. Table 5.16 shows that a significant percentage (57.6%) of respondents indicated that the salary they earned was adequate to meet their needs and aspirations, and 47% agreed that the allowances they received were attractive. 48.3% indicated that salary raises were regular at their institutions.

In terms of equity, 44.3% of respondents were satisfied with their salaries compared to those of other academic staff at the same institution with similar qualifications. However, a percentage of respondents (41.4%) that was high enough to be ignored were not satisfied with their salaries compared to those of other employees in other organisations with similar qualifications. Moreover, when the participants were asked whether the salaries offered by their institutions improved academic staff retention, the response was fairly evenly split, with 32.2% indicating that the salary offered by their institutions increased academic staff retention, and 38.5% indicating the opposite.

**Table 5.16: Salary**

| Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| **The salary I earn is adequate to meet my needs and aspirations** | 10.4 | 18.4 | 13.6 | 41.1 | 16.5 | 100.0 |
| **The institution offers attractive allowances (e.g., housing, electricity, water, transportation, telephone) to academic staff** | 14.1 | 16.9 | 22.0 | 30.4 | 16.6 | 100.0 |
| **Salary raises are regular in this institution** | 21.0 | 15.2 | 15.5 | 31.4 | 16.9 | 100.0 |
| **I am satisfied with the amount of salary I earn compared to that of other employees in other organisations with similar qualifications** | 16.9 | 24.5 | 19.1 | 25.5 | 14.0 | 100.0 |
| **I am satisfied with the amount of salary I earn compared to that of other academic staff in this institution with similar qualifications** | 16.2 | 18.8 | 20.7 | 27.8 | 16.5 | 100.0 |
| **The salary given by this institution increases academic staff retention** | 18.6 | 19.9 | 29.3 | 18.6 | 13.6 | 100.0 |

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

***Fringe Benefits***

Fringe benefits were measured based on whether they were commensurate, competitive and fair. A considerable percentage (59.2%) indicated that their institutions did not provide rewards for skilled academic staff that matched their performance (see Table 5.17). Similarly, 68.1% mentioned that their institutions did not provide bonuses for academic staff according to their positions and consistent with their level of performance. 42.5% stated that financial support was not regularly given by the institution to attend conferences and/or workshops. (According to the academic staff who were interviewed, financial support had been reduced in some institutions and stopped in others following the oil price crisis, as will be discussed in Chapter 6, page 129). 40.5% mentioned that academic staff were not offered scholarships by their institutions to continue their higher education; but it must be kept in mind that this percentage might be affected by the expatriate academic staff who filled out the questionnaire as they do not receive scholarships to continue their higher education; these scholarships are reserved for Omani academics. In addition, scholarships were stopped in some public HEIs after the 2014 oil price crisis. Also, many private HEIs offer a very limited number of scholarships to their staff. However, all Omani academic staff can apply to the Omani national programme for higher education scholarships, which is available to the public.

The only factor that was considered to be satisfactory by many academic staff members was health service or health insurance. 53.3% of respondents indicated that their institutions offered a suitable health service or health insurance, and a similar percentage (51.5%) stated that this service covered all members of the academic staff's families. Some institutions have on-site health centres or offer health insurance to their staff. One of the interviewees was very satisfied with the on-site health service, which covers all of her family members. On the other hand, another interviewee who worked for the same institution expressed his dissatisfaction with the extreme delay he had experienced while waiting to be seen by a doctor at the on-site facility. Although he had an appointment and was the only patient in the clinic, he was only seen after three hours. He indicated that such issues may cause delays or cancellations of lectures, which may affect the students' progress. He also mentioned that if no improvements were made to the health service, this might affect his desire to stay at the institution (see page 115).

Moreover, the majority of participants (52.3%) were not satisfied with the rewards, bonuses and other fringe benefits, and 57.7% believed that those fringe benefits were not competitive. A considerable percentage (48.3%) felt that fringe benefits were not allocated fairly and in a transparent manner. In general, 47.3% believed that the fringe benefits in their institutions did not increase academic staff retention.

**Table 5.17: Fringe Benefits**

| Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| **The institution provides rewards for skilled academic staff that match their performance** | 30.4 | 28.8 | 22.7 | 13.9 | 4.2 | 100.0 |
| **The institution provides bonuses for academic staff according to their position and consistent with their level of performance** | 32.9 | 35.2 | 18.1 | 10.9 | 2.9 | 100.0 |
| **The institution offers suitable health services/health insurance for academic staff** | 16.9 | 17.5 | 12.3 | 32.8 | 20.5 | 100.0 |
| **Health services/insurance granted by the institution covers all members of the academic staff's family** | 19.3 | 14.6 | 14.6 | 27.5 | 24.0 | 100.0 |
| **Financial support is regularly given by the institution to attend conferences and/or workshops** | 19.0 | 23.5 | 23.5 | 22.5 | 11.5 | 100.0 |
| **Scholarships are offered by the institution to its academic staff to continue their higher education** | 20.9 | 19.6 | 26.4 | 20.9 | 12.2 | 100.0 |
| **I am satisfied with the amount of rewards, bonuses and other extras I receive for my work** | 24.8 | 27.5 | 25.8 | 16.3 | 5.6 | 100.0 |
| **The fringe benefits such as rewards, bonuses, etc. in this institution are competitive** | 30.4 | 27.3 | 29.0 | 10.2 | 3.1 | 100.0 |
| **The fringe benefits are allocated fairly and in a transparent manner** | 28.6 | 19.7 | 38.3 | 9.7 | 3.7 | 100.0 |
| **The fringe benefits in this institution increase academic staff retention** | 25.3 | 22.0 | 32.4 | 13.5 | 6.8 | 100.0 |

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

### ***Promotion***

Promotion was measured based on its availability, fairness, competitiveness, clarity, and transparency. A considerable percentage of the participants (52.1%) indicated that the opportunities for promotion at their institutions were not good, and 41.2% felt that promotion was not always based on merit (Table 5.18). 46.2% of the academic staff who participated in this study believed that the promotion criteria at their institutions place too much emphasis on publications at the expense of teaching and other duties (further explanation based on the conducted interviews will be provided in Chapter 6). 42.2% of the respondents did not think that promotion opportunities at their institutions were better than those at other institutions. However, 42% of the participants thought that the promotion criteria at their institutions were clear, and a significant percentage (56.8%) felt that their institutions valued their academic staff's career growth.

On the other hand, regarding transparency, the percentages of people who agreed, disagreed and were neutral were very similar. 30.9% of participants thought that what was stated in the promotion criteria was always applied, 36.5% believed that this was not the case, and 32.6% were neutral. In general, 46.1% were dissatisfied with the promotion practices at their institutions and more than half of the participants (51%) indicated that failure to get a promotion is one of the main reasons why academic staff leave their institutions to work elsewhere.

**Table 5.18: Promotion**

| Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| **There are good opportunities for promotion at the institution** | 28.1 | 24.0 | 21.4 | 18.5 | 8.0 | 100.0 |
| **Promotion is always based on merit at this institution** | 20.6 | 20.6 | 26.1 | 22.9 | 9.8 | 100.0 |
| **The promotion criteria at this institution over-emphasises publications at the expense of teaching and other duties** | 12.9 | 19.1 | 21.8 | 30.7 | 15.5 | 100.0 |
| **Promotion opportunities at this institution are better than those at other institutions** | 21.1 | 21.1 | 40.3 | 11.4 | 6.1 | 100.0 |
| **Academic staff are promoted when they earn academic qualifications** | 15.5 | 18.8 | 24.7 | 30.9 | 10.1 | 100.0 |
| **The promotion criteria are clear at the institution** | 18.7 | 15.8 | 23.5 | 29.0 | 13.0 | 100.0 |
| **What is stated in the promotion criteria is always what is practised** | 17.9 | 18.6 | 32.6 | 21.5 | 9.4 | 100.0 |
| **I am satisfied with the promotion practices at this institution** | 25.0 | 21.1 | 29.9 | 17.2 | 6.8 | 100.0 |
| **The academic staff's upward career growth is important to this institution** | 11.3 | 9.3 | 22.6 | 26.6 | 30.2 | 100.0 |
| **Failure to get promotion is one of the main reasons why academic staff leave this institution for employment elsewhere** | 9.6 | 12.3 | 27.1 | 23.6 | 27.4 | 100.0 |

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

## *Non-Financial Incentives*

The participants' responses regarding each non-financial incentive type – leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, working conditions, and recognition and appreciation – are discussed in this section.

### ***Leadership and Supervision Skills***

Leadership and supervision skills were measured based on the academic staff's perceptions of their treatment, communication, and involvement in decision-making. Table 5.19 shows that a significant percentage of the respondents (55.2%) believed that they were treated fairly. Similarly, a considerable percentage (53.5%) indicated that their supervisors conveyed their needs, ideas and suggestions to their managers, and similar percentage (53.7%) indicated that they had the opportunity to interact with management above their immediate supervisors.

Many academic staff members were pleased with the communication they received from their supervisors. 43.9% stated that their supervisors assisted them in their personal problems, and 48.5% indicated that their supervisors communicated with them regularly on matters that are important to them. Similarly, 45.8% mentioned that they always received feedback from their supervisors that helped to improve their performance. Just over half of the participants (51.6%) indicated that their supervisors often involved them in decision-making, problem-solving, and policy-making in the institution. 40.8% of participants expressed satisfaction with the competence of their supervisors. 37.5% of the participants felt that the supervision skills and leadership style of the management in their institutions increased academic staff retention, whereas a similar percentage (38.1%) felt this was not the case.

**Table 5.19: Leadership and Supervision Skills**

| Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| **My supervisor treats every one fairly** | 14.4 | 9.9 | 20.5 | 35.3 | 19.9 | 100.0 |
| **The supervisor assists the academic staff with their personal problems** | 13.2 | 14.8 | 28.1 | 30.3 | 13.6 | 100.0 |
| **The supervisor conveys my needs, ideas and suggestions to his/her manager** | 10.3 | 13.8 | 22.4 | 38.1 | 15.4 | 100.0 |
| **The supervisor often involves staff in decision-making, problem-solving and policy-making in the institution** | 15.7 | 14.4 | 18.3 | 33.3 | 18.3 | 100.0 |
| **I have the opportunity to interact with management above my immediate supervisor** | 13.9 | 9.4 | 23.0 | 36.6 | 17.1 | 100.0 |
| **I am satisfied with the competence of the supervisors at this institution** | 15.3 | 15.6 | 28.3 | 29.6 | 11.2 | 100.0 |
| **The supervisor communicates to staff regularly on matters important to them** | 15.8 | 16.1 | 19.6 | 35.0 | 13.5 | 100.0 |
| **I always receive feedback from my supervisor that helps to improve my performance** | 13.4 | 16.6 | 24.2 | 34.7 | 11.1 | 100.0 |
| **The supervision skills and leadership style of the management at this institution increase academic staff retention** | 21.9 | 16.2 | 24.4 | 22.9 | 14.6 | 100.0 |

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

***Continuing Professional Development***

Continuing professional development was measured based on opportunity for career growth, regularity, fairness and equity. As Table 5.20 shows, just under half (46.6%) of the respondents indicated that their institutions provided the opportunity for academic growth and career advancement, and 41.1% mentioned that their institutions employed appropriate methods to improve the level of learning of their academic staff. 41.2% indicated that the professional opportunities offered by their institutions were good compared with those available at other institutions.

Training opportunities were offered regularly at the institutions according to 42.8% of participants. The same percentage (42.8%) of respondents indicated that they were regularly given the opportunity to attend conferences and/or workshops to enhance their professional growth. Fairness was shown all the time in the implementation of learning/training policy for academic staff according to 36.8% of the participants; but this was not the case according to a similar percentage (35.3%).

39.2% of the participants expressed their satisfaction with the professional development opportunities provided by their institutions, whereas a similar percentage (37.6%) were not satisfied. A sizeable percentage (42.1%) felt that professional development opportunities offered to the academic staff of their institutions increased their intention to stay. Overall, there was not a great difference between the respondents' opinions regarding continuing professional development provided by the institutions.

**Table 5.20: Continuing Professional Development**

| Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| **The institution provides the opportunity for academic growth and career advancement** | 15.6 | 19.7 | 18.1 | 37.8 | 8.8 | 100.0 |
| **The institution implements appropriate methods to raise the level of learning of its academic staff** | 14.6 | 20.6 | 23.7 | 33.2 | 7.9 | 100.0 |
| **Training opportunities are offered regularly at this institution** | 13.7 | 20.6 | 22.9 | 33.3 | 9.5 | 100.0 |
| **I am regularly given the opportunity to attend conferences and/or workshops to enhance my professional growth** | 15.7 | 19.5 | 22.0 | 31.9 | 10.9 | 100.0 |
| **I am satisfied with the professional development opportunities provided by this institution** | 17.5 | 20.1 | 23.2 | 30.6 | 8.6 | 100.0 |
| **Fairness is shown all the time in implementing policies for academic staff learning/training** | 15.1 | 20.2 | 27.9 | 28.5 | 8.3 | 100.0 |
| **This institution has good professional development opportunities compared with other institutions** | 11.5 | 16.6 | 30.7 | 29.4 | 11.8 | 100.0 |
| **Professional development opportunities offered to the academic staff at this institution increase employee retention** | 11.7 | 19.2 | 27.0 | 23.1 | 19.0 | 100.0 |

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

### *Working Conditions: Autonomy and Work Environment*

Working conditions was one of the variables used to measure academic staff retention. Because the term "working conditions" can refer to many aspects of human resource practices, it was divided into two parts: autonomy and work environment, and infrastructure and resources. The first element, autonomy and work environment, was measured based on perceptions of freedom, flexibility, job security, and environment. More than half of the respondents (57.7%) mentioned that they had the opportunity to try out their own methods when performing their jobs, and 48% stated that, in large part, they had freedom of choice when it came to the tasks they carried out (see Table 5.21).

A significant percentage (54.8%) of the respondents felt that the working hours were flexible for the academic staff at their institutions, and a large majority of participants (76.6%) believed that their institutions offered convenient annual leave. A considerable percentage (61.5%) of participants believed that their institutions provided steady employment, and just over half (56.3%) felt safe and secure in their jobs. Colleagues treat one another well within their institutions according to most of the respondents (70.1%). As for the overall working environment in the institutions, almost two-thirds (64.2%) of participants were satisfied, and 63.5% felt that the positive working environment in their institutions increased academic staff retention.

**Table 5.21: Autonomy and Work Environment**

| Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| **I have the chance to try out my own methods to perform my job** | 7.3 | 14.6 | 20.4 | 44.3 | 13.4 | 100.0 |
| **In large part, we have freedom of choice when it comes to which tasks we perform** | 9.5 | 22.5 | 20.0 | 38.5 | 9.5 | 100.0 |
| **The institution offers convenient annual leave for academic staff** | 4.8 | 8.0 | 10.6 | 40.4 | 36.2 | 100.0 |
| **The institution provides steady employment** | 4.8 | 9.3 | 24.4 | 38.1 | 23.4 | 100.0 |
| **I feel safe and secure in my job** | 11.1 | 11.7 | 20.9 | 33.2 | 23.1 | 100.0 |
| **Working hours are flexible for academic staff at this institution** | 13.7 | 15.6 | 15.9 | 34.7 | 20.1 | 100.0 |
| **Colleagues treat one another well within this institution** | 7.3 | 8.3 | 14.3 | 41.1 | 29.0 | 100.0 |
| **I am satisfied with the overall working environment in the institution** | 9.2 | 9.8 | 16.8 | 43.5 | 20.7 | 100.0 |
| **A positive working environment in this institution increases academic staff retention** | 9.6 | 8.3 | 18.6 | 32.4 | 31.1 | 100.0 |

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

### ***Working Conditions: Infrastructure and Resources***

The second element of working conditions – infrastructure and resources – was measured based on perceptions of appropriateness and continuous improvement. Almost two-thirds of respondents (66.3%) mentioned that their institutions provided appropriate and well-furnished offices for their academic staff; similarly, 69.6% indicated that teaching resources were available at their institutions that meet the work requirements (Table 5.22).

A significant percentage (58.4%) indicated that teaching resources were developed continuously to keep pace with technological and information development. 63.3% of the participants were satisfied with the infrastructure and resources available at their institutions, and almost half of the participants (49.2%) believed that the teaching resources offered to the academic staff at their institutions increased their retention.

**Table 5.22: Infrastructure and Resources**

| Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| **The institution provides appropriate and well-furnished offices for its academic staff** | 10.2 | 10.5 | 13.0 | 41.0 | 25.3 | 100.0 |
| **Teaching resources that meet the work requirements are available in this institution** | 8.9 | 11.7 | 9.8 | 49.1 | 20.5 | 100.0 |
| **I am satisfied with the infrastructure and resources available in this institution** | 9.2 | 11.4 | 16.1 | 41.1 | 22.2 | 100.0 |
| **Teaching resources are developed continuously to keep pace with technological and information development** | 11.4 | 14.6 | 15.6 | 40.6 | 17.8 | 100.0 |
| **Teaching resources offered to the academic staff at this institution increase employee retention** | 8.6 | 14.7 | 27.5 | 31.6 | 17.6 | 100.0 |

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

### ***Recognition and Appreciation***

The variable "recognition and appreciation" was measured based on the availability of various forms of recognition and appreciation that match the academic staff's efforts. It can be seen from Table 5.23 that a considerable percentage (52.3%) of respondents mentioned that their institutions granted certificates of appreciation to recognise the achievements of their academic staff. A similar proportion (54.5%) of respondents indicated that their supervisors appreciated their efforts at work, and 52.7% indicated that they received praise when they did a good job.

The majority of respondents (70.9%) indicated that they were treated with respect in the institutions, and 61.1% mentioned that a personal "thank you" from their supervisors or colleagues was a form of recognition used in the institutions. However, most respondents (63.3%) mentioned that they did not receive any form of gifts as appreciation for their work. 41% of participants were satisfied with the recognition and appreciation they were shown by their institution, whereas 35.6% were dissatisfied. More than half of the respondents (55.7%) felt that the recognition and appreciation provided to academic staff in their institutions encouraged their retention.

**Table 5.23: Recognition and Appreciation**

| Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| **The institution grants certificates of appreciation to recognise the achievements of its academic staff** | 10.5 | 14.3 | 22.9 | 39.8 | 12.5 | 100.0 |
| **My supervisor appreciates my efforts at work** | 8.6 | 16.2 | 20.7 | 38.5 | 16.0 | 100.0 |
| **I get praise when I am doing a good job** | 10.5 | 14.6 | 22.2 | 38.1 | 14.6 | 100.0 |
| **A personal "thank you" from my supervisor or colleague is a form of recognition used in this institution** | 10.0 | 9.3 | 19.6 | 40.5 | 20.6 | 100.0 |
| **I receive small gifts such as watches, gift cards, vouchers to restaurant, etc. as tokens of appreciation for my work** | 37.3 | 26.0 | 19.7 | 12.7 | 4.3 | 100.0 |
| **I am satisfied with the recognition and appreciation I get from this institution** | 17.3 | 18.3 | 23.4 | 30.4 | 10.6 | 100.0 |
| **I am treated with respect in the institution** | 8.0 | 8.0 | 13.1 | 41.7 | 29.2 | 100.0 |
| **The recognition and appreciation provided to the academic staff at this institution encourages their retention** | 11.9 | 12.2 | 20.2 | 28.5 | 27.2 | 100.0 |

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

## 5.4 Inferential Analysis

Parametric tests were used to analyse the quantitative data, as their appropriateness for this kind of test was assured by the sufficiently large sample size and the fact that the data were normally distributed. The approximately bell-shaped histogram (Figure 5.3) and the significance level for academic staff retention calculated using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which was 0.215 (>0.05) (Table 5.24), demonstrate the normal distribution of the data. The use of the Likert scale for measurement and the purpose of the study, which is to examine the relationship between incentives and academic staff retention, make correlation and regression the most suitable tests for analysing the data. Correlation and linear regression are the most commonly used techniques for investigating the relationship between two quantitative variables, as Bewick et al. (2003) state. Therefore, parametric tests were used to analyse the data for this study.

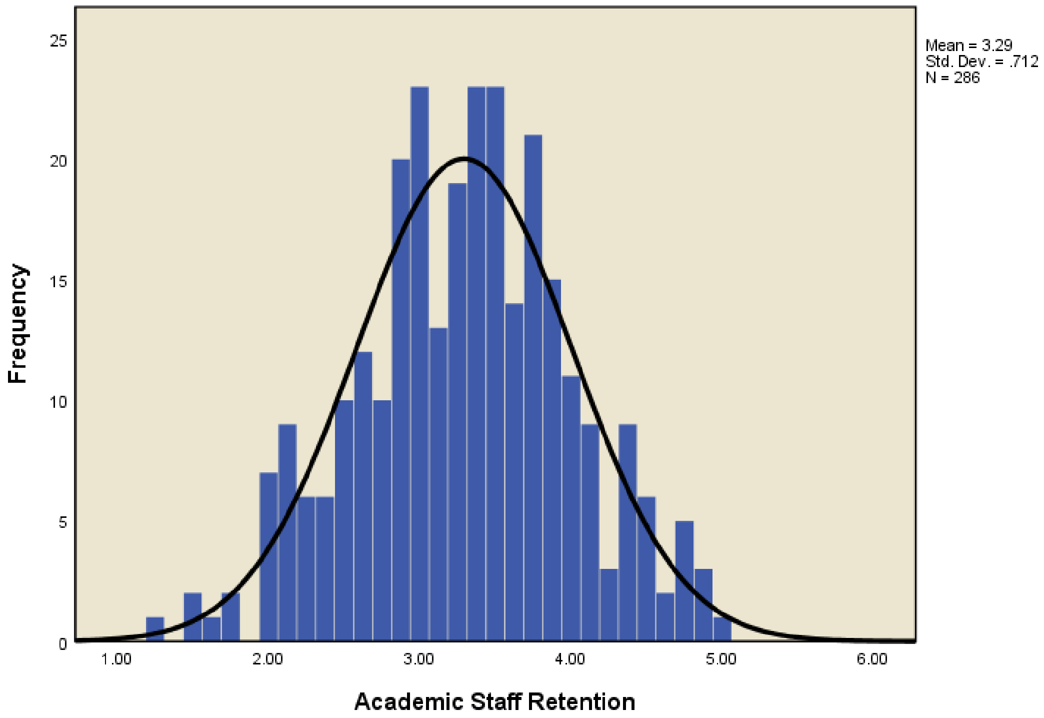


**Figure 5.3: Academic Staff Retention Histogram**

**Table 5.24: Statistical Tests of Normality**

| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| ASR | .053 | 286 | .051 | .993 | 286 | .215 |

ASR = Academic Staff Retention

It is worth mentioning that for the purpose of using the data for the inferential statistics, variable “items” that were inconsistent with other items were coded in reverse to make them consistent with other variables. For example, items number 2, 4, 5 and 8 in Table 5.13 were coded in reverse to make them consistent with other variables that measure the intention to stay. Also, to manipulate the missing data, mean substitution was used.

### 5.4.1 Factor Analysis

‘Factor analysis is an interdependence technique whose primary purpose is to define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis’ (Hair et al., 2010). According to Cohen et al. (2018, p.818), factor analysis is one of the best grouping techniques and one that is widely used in data analysis. Factor analysis examines structures and commonalities in the relationships between variable “items”. Hair et al. (2010) state that factor analysis is the first multivariate technique that should be performed as it plays a critical role in the application of other multivariate techniques. Thus, it is usually used prior to more targeted multivariate analysis. ‘Factor analysis can be utilized to examine the underlying patterns or relationships for a large number of variables and to determine whether the information can be condensed or summarized in a smaller set of factors or components’ (Hair et al., 2010). There are two forms of factor analysis, both of which were performed in this research: exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Although the construct and the items within it were developed through the literature, it was necessary to perform factor analysis to ensure that the variable “items” within the factor “construct” were interrelated to each other and independent of the items constructing other factors or constructs (Hair et al., 2010). Factor analysis also helps eliminate items that are not highly interrelated with other items in the same group.

1. **Exploratory Factor Analysis**

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was first conducted using SPSS to ensure the inter-correlation between the items within the construct and to examine the possible addition or reduction of the variables. Exploratory factor analysis is run to seek, describe, and summarise data by grouping together variables that are correlated (Tabachink and Fidell, 2001). To perform the exploratory factor analysis, principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation and a loading factor of 0.5 was utilised. Varimax factor rotation is considered superior to other factor rotation methods for achieving a simplified factor structure (Hair et al., 2010) and it is commonly used by researchers in exploratory factor analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). Hair et al. (2010) state that factor loadings of 0.3 to 0.4 are acceptable; however, a factor loading of greater than 0.5 is considered necessary for practical significance.

Exploratory factor analysis was performed and items with low-loading values were deleted, as were those that appeared in more than one factor, did not get a load, or where communalities were less than 0.5. As Hair et al. (2010) state, 'An optimal structure exists when all variables have high loadings only on a single factor.' Thus, the optimal structure was achieved in this study as all the variable "items" had high loadings only in a single factor.

The exploratory factor analysis resulted in nine components where items were recalled and labelled with the constructs conceptualised from the literature (as presented in Chapters 3 and 4). These components are: (1) Salary (SAL); (2) Fringe Benefits (FRB); (3) Promotion (PRO); (4) Leadership and Supervision Skills (LSS); (5) Continuing Professional Development (CPD); (6) Autonomy and Work Environment (AWE); (7) Infrastructure and Resources (IAR); (8) Recognition and Appreciation (RAA); and (9) Academic Staff Retention (ASR). Each item was also given a label, which will be utilised throughout the rest of the thesis. Appendix E summarises the results of the exploratory factor analysis.

As a result of implementing exploratory factor analysis, the number of measurement items used in the dataset was reduced from 90 items to 50, and the resultant constructs were consistent with the constructs developed for the study in Chapters 3 and 4. Communality is defined by Hair et al. (2010) as the 'total amount of variance an original variable shares with all other variables included in the analysis'. Communalities of variables should be greater than 0.50 to be retained in the analysis; however, communality of 0.299 is considered the lowest acceptable value and can therefore still be retained for the purpose of the study (Hair et al., 2010). All items in the exploratory factor analysis exceeded the recommended value of 0.5 for communality and factor loading under each component. The communalities of the items ranged from 0.504 to 0.853, and the factor loadings ranged from 0.529 to 0.825.

A measure of sampling adequacy to assess the appropriateness of performing exploratory factor analysis was also made to ensure that the selected variable "items" were sufficiently inter-correlated to produce a factor or a construct. The overall sampling adequacy for the performed analysis was 0.950. According to Hair et al. (2010), the value of the sampling adequacy should exceed 0.5, with values of 0.80 and above considered ‘meritorious’.

The reliability of the exploratory factor analysis was assessed by calculating Cronbach’s alpha. Cronbach’s alpha is a measure of reliability coefficient that ranges from 0 to 1 (Hair et al., 2010; Cohen et al., 2018), with a level of 0.7 considered acceptable (Adamson and Prion, 2013). Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient was utilised to examine the internal consistency of the items in the constructs shown in Appendix E. Kottner and Streiner (2010, p.926) define internal consistency as the degree to which all the items measure the same attribute or dimension. It measures how an item or a set of items is consistent in what it is intended to measure (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001; Hair et al., 2010). The reliability test for the exploratory factor analysis demonstrated a very high level of internal consistency or reliability of 0.970. According to Cohen et al. (2018, p.774), an alpha coefficient of greater than 0.90 is considered to have very high reliability.

## 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In order to confirm and validate the nine components that resulted from the exploratory factor analysis and to check for reliability and sufficient inter-correlation, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using SPSS. The confirmatory factor analysis was performed for each construct. The items of each construct were checked to see if they were loaded to one single factor. Communalities, factor loadings, sampling adequacy, and Cronbach’s alpha were all checked. Appendix F presents the results of the confirmatory factor analysis.

The communalities of all the items under each construct were greater than 0.5. The values ranged from 0.507 to 0.857, with the exception of four items: PRO4 = 0.466, AWE3 = 0.399, AWE6 = 0.499, and ASR4 = 0.494. However, those items were retained as they still exceeded the minimal acceptable value of 0.299. The factor loadings ranged from 0.631 to 0.926. Thus, the factor loadings for all items under each construct were greater than 0.5, which means that they are practically significant.

The sampling adequacy for all constructs exceeded the minimum acceptable value of 0.5. This means that the items under each construct are sufficiently inter-correlated. The results show that all constructs were “meritorious” as the values were above 0.8, with the exception of the constructs of salary and academic staff retention, which were considered as middling as they were above 0.7. The Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.826 to 0.940, based on which it can be said that all the constructs ranged from having high reliability (0.80 to 0.90) to having very high reliability (greater than 0.90), according to Cohen et al. (2018, p.774).

### 5.4.2 Aggregation of Variables

After performing the exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis tests and selecting items that are highly inter-related within the constructs, the set of items that measures each variable "construct" was aggregated by computing the average using SPSS. The average was utilised when calculating the subsequent tests of correlation and regression. As mentioned earlier, a Likert scale was used; thus, the respondents chose their answers to the questions from the following options: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree. The minimum and maximum in Table 5.25 indicate the minimum and maximum scores given to each of the independent variables.

Comparing the means of the variables, it was found that autonomy and work environment and infrastructure and resources were given the highest ratings, with mean values of 3.537 and 3.534, respectively. This means that they were rated more favourably than the other variables. Since these means are above 3.0, this indicates that the respondents were satisfied with these non-financial incentives. This is consistent with the results of the earlier descriptive statistics analysis (see Section 5.3.2), where 64.2% of respondents were satisfied with the autonomy and work environment and 63.3% were satisfied with the infrastructure and resources in their institutions. The third variable in the ranking was recognition and appreciation, which also constitutes a non-financial incentive.

The variable fringe benefits had a mean of 2.309 and promotion had a mean of 2.793. Both are financial incentives and had the lowest means among the variables, below 3.0, which indicates the dissatisfaction of the participants with the fringe benefits and promotion provided by their institutions. This aligns with the earlier results (see Section 5.3.2), where 52.3% of the participants were dissatisfied with the fringe benefits provided by their institutions. Also, the results align with the earlier findings that 46.1% of the participants were dissatisfied with their institutions' promotion and 51% cited failure to get a promotion was one of the main reasons why academic staff leave their institutions for employment elsewhere.

The means of the remaining independent variables were slightly higher than 3.0. These variables are salary (3.133), leadership and supervision skills (3.131), and continuing professional development (3.016). Although these means suggest employee satisfaction, they indicate that there was not a large difference between the percentages of satisfied and dissatisfied participants with regards to these incentives (see Section 5.3.2).

The dependent variable, academic staff retention, was measured using the inverse of intention to leave items so as to measure the intention to stay. The mean of those items was computed, with the result being 3.210. The objective of aggregating the items was not only to establish the mean, but to enable the researcher to carry out further statistical analysis (Ng'ethe, 2013, p.107).

**Table 5.25: Descriptive Statistics of Aggregated Variable**

| Variable | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SAL | 317 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.1333 | 1.03987 |
| FRB | 317 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.3088 | .88389 |
| PRO | 317 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.7927 | .98886 |
| LSS | 317 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.1313 | 1.00386 |
| CPD | 317 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.0163 | 1.02504 |
| AWE | 317 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.5371 | .85123 |
| IAR | 317 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.5335 | 1.08576 |
| RAA | 317 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.3709 | 1.00660 |
| ASR | 317 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.2096 | .95945 |

### 5.4.3 Correlation

After performing the factor analysis and aggregation of variables, the researcher needed to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, as the main purpose of the research is to examine the relationship between the different incentives and academic staff retention. To do so, correlation and regression statistical techniques were used. According to Bewick et al. (2003, p.451), the most commonly used techniques for examining the relationship between two quantitative variables are correlation and linear regression. Correlation is utilised to explore whether there is a relationship between two variables and the strength of that relationship, and regression expresses the relationship in the form of an equation.

Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*), which is one of the best-known measures of association (Cohen et al., 2018, p.767), was used in this study. Its value ranges from -1.0 to +1.0, and the bigger the correlation is, the stronger the coefficient is between the two variables. A positive relationship or correlation exists when the two variables fluctuate in the same direction; i.e., when one of them increases and the other increases as well, or vice versa. +1.0 represents a perfect positive correlation between two variables. On the other hand, a negative relationship or correlation exists when an increase in one variable is accompanied by a decrease in the other. Thus, -1.0 represents a perfect negative correlation between two variables (Bewick et al., 2003; Hair et al., 2010; Bryman 2012; Cohen et al., 2018). However, perfect correlations are rarely found, and most correlation coefficients in social research are around +0.5 or less. A value of zero indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables (Cohen et al., 2018, p.768).

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used in this research to test whether there is interdependency between the independent variables, and whether there is a relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. It was also utilised to identify the direction and strength of the investigated relationship. It can be seen from Table 5.26 that the correlation matrix consists of three sections. The first section represents the correlation coefficient. Thus, it can be seen that there is a positive relationship between the independent variables – Salary (SAL), Fringe Benefits (FRB), Promotion (PRO), Leadership and Supervision Skills (LSS), Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Autonomy and Work Environment (AWE), Infrastructure and Resources (IAR), and Recognition and Appreciation (RAA) – and the dependent variable – Academic Staff Retention (ASR). In addition, there is a positive correlation among the independent variables themselves. The slanting of the matrix shows values of 1.000, which indicates perfect correlation of the variables with themselves (Cohen et al., 2018, p.768). However, there is no perfect multicollinearity between the independent variables. According to Cohen et al. (2018, p.802), perfect multicollinearity should be avoided; i.e., one should avoid strong correlation between independent variables where $r = 0.9$ or higher.

The second section of the matrix represents the significance levels of the correlations. The one-tailed significance of each correlation demonstrates that all the correlations are highly significant at $p < 0.001$. According to Cohen et al. (2018, p.769), the significance levels could be reported as $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$, $p = 0.05$, $p = 0.01$, or $p = 0.001$. The third section represents the sample size or the number of participants in each correlation, which in this case is 317.

**Table 5.26: Correlation Matrix**

| | Variable | ASR | SAL | FRB | PRO | LSS | CPD | AWE | IAR | RAA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Correlation | ASR | 1.000 | .373 | .346 | .387 | .436 | .463 | .367 | .400 | .390 |
| | SAL | .373 | 1.000 | .464 | .379 | .413 | .366 | .372 | .371 | .396 |
| | FRB | .346 | .464 | 1.000 | .604 | .485 | .564 | .323 | .402 | .446 |
| | PRO | .387 | .379 | .604 | 1.000 | .555 | .674 | .445 | .548 | .499 |
| | LSS | .436 | .413 | .485 | .555 | 1.000 | .653 | .609 | .532 | .684 |
| | CPD | .463 | .366 | .564 | .674 | .653 | 1.000 | .597 | .673 | .597 |
| | AWE | .367 | .372 | .323 | .445 | .609 | .597 | 1.000 | .586 | .584 |
| | IAR | .400 | .371 | .402 | .548 | .532 | .673 | .586 | 1.000 | .545 |
| | RAA | .390 | .396 | .446 | .499 | .684 | .597 | .584 | .545 | 1.000 |
| Sig. (1-tailed) | ASR | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | SAL | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | FRB | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | PRO | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | LSS | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | CPD | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | AWE | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 | .000 |
| | IAR | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . | .000 |
| | RAA | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . |
| N | ASR | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 |
| | SAL | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 |
| | FRB | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 |
| | PRO | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 |
| | LSS | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 |
| | CPD | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 |
| | AWE | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 |
| | IAR | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 |
| | RAA | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 | 317 |

### 5.4.4 Regression

After performing the correlation test, discovering that there is a positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables and finding that interrelationships exist among the independent variables as well, multiple regression analysis was conducted in order to examine the joint association of the explanatory variables with the dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis is defined by Hair et al. (2010) as a statistical technique that is used to analyse the relationship between several independent variables and a single dependent variable. Walliman (2011, p.125) states that multiple regression measures the effects of two or more independent variables on a single dependent variable.

**Table 5.27: Regression Models**

| | (1)<br>Model 1 | (2)<br>Model 2 | (3)<br>Model 3 | (4)<br>Model 4 | (5)<br>Model 5 | (6)<br>Model 6 | (7)<br>Model 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HEI type (Public=0) | -0.194* | | | | | | -0.042 |
| Nationality (Omani=0) | | 0.399*** | | | | | -0.132 |
| Gender (Male=0) | | | -0.112 | | | | -0.081 |
| Age range 30-34 | | | 0.344 | | | | 0.309 |
| Age range 35-39 | | | 0.306 | | | | 0.226 |
| Age range 40-44 | | | 0.541* | | | | 0.387 |
| Age range 45-49 | | | 0.709** | | | | 0.467 |
| Age range 50-54 | | | 0.674** | | | | 0.542 |
| Age range 55+ | | | 0.931*** | | | | 0.690* |
| Respondent has a PhD | | | -0.124 | | | | -0.138 |
| Leadership position (No=0) | | | | 0.135 | | | 0.032 |
| Heavy teaching load (13 hours or more) | | | | 0.046 | | | 0.068 |
| Medicine and health science | | | | 0.465*** | | | 0.111 |
| Science and engineering | | | | 0.048 | | | -0.073 |
| Business and information technology | | | | 0.085 | | | -0.118 |
| Been in job for 5-10 years | | | | | 0.016 | | -0.043 |
| Been in job 11 years or more | | | | | 0.098 | | 0.076 |
| Salaries | | | | | | 0.176*** | 0.186*** |
| Fringe benefits | | | | | | 0.007 | 0.002 |
| Promotion | | | | | | 0.030 | 0.023 |
| Leadership and supervision skills | | | | | | 0.173** | 0.186** |
| Continuing professional development | | | | | | 0.205** | 0.179* |
| Autonomy and work environment | | | | | | -0.008 | 0.002 |
| Infrastructure and resources | | | | | | 0.057 | 0.052 |
| Recognition and appreciation | | | | | | 0.027 | 0.025 |
| Constant | 3.325*** | 2.982*** | 2.813*** | 3.057*** | 3.174*** | 1.135*** | 0.959** |
| Observations | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 259 | 259 |
| R-square | 0.009 | 0.040 | 0.056 | 0.024 | 0.002 | 0.317 | 0.353 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

As the aim of this study is to examine the drivers of staff retention, the researcher applied an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression on a single dependent variable 'academic staff retention', fitting models of gradually increasing complexity, utilising variables relating to the nature of the institution, individual respondents' features, characteristics of the work environment, length of service, and, finally, the eight factors related to human resource policies – salary, fringe benefits, promotion, leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, and recognition.

The results of this exercise are shown in Table 5.27 above.

The first model in Table 5.27 tests whether the type of institution (public or private) affects staff retention. As private HEIs are coded as 1, this suggests that staff are more likely to leave private institutions by 0.19 points (recall that the dependent variable is a scale from 0 to 5). The effect is significant at the 95% level, but a low $R^2$ (0.009) suggests this institutional factor only explains about 1% of the total variation.

The second model tests whether the nationality of academic staff (Omani or non-Omani) impacts retention. The nationality factor was tested separately from the rest of the respondents' characteristics as its influence upon retention is one of the research questions that needs to be investigated. The results reveal a strongly significant effect of being non-Omani, which increases retention by 0.4 points. However, a low $R^2$ suggests that this factor explains 4% of the variation in academic staff retention.

The third model tests for the influence of certain characteristics of the respondents upon retention. Only the characteristic of age shows a statistically significant effect on retention. The results show that being aged 40 or above has a statistically significant effect on retention and this effect becomes stronger as age increases. Thus, being aged 55 or above has the strongest effect, increasing retention by 0.93 points. Presumably, this is explained by the fact that people tend to seek greater stability as they age (see the section on Stability on page 145). Although there is still a low $R^2$, the model can explain about 5.6% of variation in staff retention.

The fourth model examines differences in retention across subject areas, using arts and social sciences as a reference category. This reveals a strongly significant effect for those in the medical faculty, who are 0.47 points more intent on staying. Again, we see a low $R^2$, with the model capable of explaining 2.4% of variation in staff retention.

The fifth model examines job duration and, surprisingly, finds no effect on staff retention. However, in the sixth model, we explore the relevance of the human resources environment and see a strongly significant effect for salaries, where satisfaction with salaries increases intention to stay by 0.18 points and satisfaction with continuing professional development and leadership and supervision skills increases intention to stay by 0.21 and 0.17 points, respectively. This model has much more explanatory power than the previous models, as it is able to explain around 32% of variation in the staff's stated intention to remain or leave their institutions.

Finally, in the seventh model, all of the above factors are combined in one comprehensive model. In this setup, there are four statistically significant factors that have a bearing on staff retention: salary, leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, and being above the age of 55. Overall, the model is a reasonably good fit, explaining about 35% of retention.

## 5.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the quantitative data analysis and the results of the descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings from the quantitative data analysis have revealed a few answers to some of the research questions. This section will briefly consider the four research questions, summarising the answers provided by the data analysis discussed above.

1) What are the financial and non-financial incentives that impact academic staff retention at higher education institutions in Oman?

According to the descriptive statistics, it seems that all of the financial and non-financial incentives included in the survey affect academic staff retention. The financial incentives were salaries, fringe benefits, and promotion, while the non-financial incentives were leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, and recognition and appreciation. However, when multiple regression analysis was implemented, only four variables appeared to significantly influence retention. These four variables are salaries, leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, and age.

2) What are the factors leading to academic staff members' resignations at higher education institutions in Oman?

Academic staff members were asked to rank how import certain factors were in affecting their intention to leave their current institutions. Most of the factors were rated as 'very important' in their decisions to leave (above 50%). Working conditions, recognition and appreciation, salary, promotion, and continuous professional development were highly rated, whereas leadership and supervision skills and fringe benefits were less frequently considered very important factors, but were instead more often rated as 'important'. This means that the factors that lead to academic staff resigning are highly likely to be the same factors that influence their retention.

3) What incentive type (financial or non-financial) has a greater effect on staff retention?

As mentioned when discussing the first research question, when multiple regression analysis was implemented, four variables appeared to significantly influence retention. These four variables are salary, leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, and age. These variables represent a variety of incentives: salary is a financial incentive, whereas continuing professional development and leadership and supervision skills are non-financial incentives. Thus, based on these findings, it seems that there is no dominance of one type of incentive (financial or non-financial) over the other, and, therefore, a combination of both types is likely to be most effective for retaining staff.

4) How do characteristics such as institution type (public or private) and nationality (Omani or non-Omani) impact on retention?

Overall, when background factors are fitted into the separate regression models, they appear to be significant. Staff working at private HEIs are likely to leave; but this explains only 1% of the variation in staff retention. Also, nationality has a strong statistically significant effect on retention, and this factor explains 4% of the total variation in retention. However, when the full model is specified, these background factors cease to be significant, suggesting that contextual factors like institution type, nationality, and academic field are themselves correlated with salaries, and possibly age. Thus, when these variables are included, contextual factors cease to be statistically significant.

The next chapter will present the qualitative data analysis and findings. They can be regarded as explanatory of the results described in this chapter.

# Chapter 6: Qualitative Data Analysis and Findings

## 6.1 Introduction

Chapter Five presented the quantitative data and the results of analysing these data. To arrive at a deeper understanding of the participants' views, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the academic staff members. The questions asked in the interviews were based on the quantitative data. Gathering qualitative data through these interviews helped the researcher better understand and explain the results obtained from the quantitative data analysis. The inclusion of qualitative data enriched the study greatly, providing a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives on the incentives that impact their intentions and decisions to remain at or leave their current institutions. This chapter first presents the demographic data relating to the academic staff members who participated in the interviews, followed by an analysis of the qualitative data and the resultant findings.

## 6.2 Demographic Data of Participants

The sample for the interviews was opportunistic, consisting of a selection from the 35 survey respondents who consented to be interviewed. These volunteers provided their names and contact details after completing the survey. A list of their demographic data was prepared in order to ensure the sample included participants from both public and private HEIs. The other criteria for selection were age, gender, qualifications, academic ranking, subject specialism, years of teaching experience at their current institution, and position in the institution. The purpose of the selection criteria was to ensure as broad a range of perspectives as possible by interviewing academic staff members with different demographic characteristics.

Of the 35 respondents who shared their contact details, 16 academic staff members were selected to be interviewed (see Appendix G), eight from public HEIs and eight from private HEIs. Seven of the participants were Omanis and nine were expatriates. Nine were male and seven were female. They were all more than 30 years old: one was 30-34, three were 35-39, three were 40-44, five were 45-49, three were 50-54, and one was 55 or older. The majority of the participants (13) held PhDs, while three had master's degrees. Their positions in their institutions also varied: the interviewees included one professor, three associate professors, seven assistant professors, and five lecturers. Eight had been teaching at their current institutions for more than 10 years and eight had been there for less than 10 years. The participants were teaching different specialities: six were teaching arts and social sciences, five were teaching business studies and information technology, two were teaching engineering, two were teaching medicine and health sciences, and one was teaching science. Nine of the 16 held leadership positions.

The participants were coded according to their institution type (public or private) and nationality (Omani or expatriate). Thus, the Omani academic staff working for public HEIs were coded as ‘PubO’ and those working for private HEIs were coded as ‘PrivO’. Similarly, expatriate academic staff working for public HEIs were coded as ‘PubE’ and those working for private HEIs were coded as ‘PrivE’.

## 6.3 Factors Affecting Academic Staff Retention

The interviews were conducted using one of two languages, according to each participant’s preference. 12 of the interviews were in English and four in Arabic. Based on the coding of the data, the following themes were derived: salary, fringe benefits, promotion, leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, recognition and appreciation, prestige, stability, and Oman and Omanis. The themes that emerged can be classified as financial and non-financial incentives in relation to the factors that affect academic staff retention, with the absence, or lack, of these factors increasing the possibility of staff resignation. This is what was revealed from the interviews when the participants were asked about the factors that might lead them to leave their institutions. Many of the emerging themes concurred with those found in the quantitative findings presented in the previous chapter, while others were new. The following presentation of the findings begins with those factors also identified in the quantitative data.

### 6.3.1 Financial Incentives

The financial incentives found to affect academic staff retention, with their absence or perceived inadequacy encouraging resignation, are salary, fringe benefits, and promotion. Each will be considered in this section, where quotes from the interviews will be cited as evidence.

1. ***Salary***

Salary attracts academics to work for a particular institution and also incentivises them to remain longer at that institution. This factor is related to the perceived adequacy, attractiveness, regularity, and equity of the salary offered by the institution. Academic staff member PrivE1 explained that academics received high salaries at her institution, and because of that, retention rates were high.

> *The retention is very high. The staff do not leave this college because it offers the highest pay compared to other colleges.*

PrivE5 reinforced this view, confirming that the salary and fringe benefits he received in his current institution were better than what he had received in his previous jobs in other countries, and that this was his reason for moving to his present institution. Furthermore, he said that he expected to continue working there for the next 30 years.

However, an Omani academic who worked for a public HEI expressed the view that whilst a high salary is attractive for academics initially, the sense of satisfaction diminishes with time.

> *In the early years of a career, working in academia after completing a master's degree is very rewarding financially, unlike administrative work. However, along the way, the academic path is much more challenging in terms of promotions.* (PubO5)

On the other hand, some participants were dissatisfied that they were not receiving any raises beyond the small annual incremental raises to their basic salaries.

> *The salary does not really concern me and so I am not upset about it, but in general it may be an issue for our expatriate colleagues who left their homes to find good pay.* (PubE3)

PubE3 emphasised that this could be one of the main factors for academics' resignation. He added:

> *You can see that institutions have vacancies each year. If they had good retention, they would not need new faculty every year.*

One of the academics who worked for a private HEI had a quite different view. Although she had not received a raise for a long time, she felt quite comfortable when she compared her salary with that of others:

> *I am quite comfortable if I compare it with the salaries of the others. It is okay but there has been no raise for a very long time.* (PrivE2)

In addition, Omani academics working for public HEIs compared their salaries with those of employees working in private companies, especially oil companies:

> *If you compare this institution to the private sector, there is no comparison with the salaries they get.* (PubO4)

PubO2 said that people outside academia think that they receive high salaries and would be surprised at the actual salary levels that are paid. Also, he mentioned that people working for petrochemical companies get twice the salary they receive at the institution, despite the fact that those working in the petrochemical industry might not have obtained PhD degrees, as academics have. He added:

> *My brother is working in one of these companies in Oman and he has a master's degree, but he is working with his bachelor's degree, and his salary is higher than mine. I am an assistant professor here. His salary is higher.* (PubO2)

PubO2 indicated that this was not the case for his brother alone, but also for two of his students. He said that he feels happy for and proud of his students because he had played a part in influencing them at a certain stage of their lives. However, at the same time, he felt that they were in better positions than he was.

He added that he had already received an offer from a university in another country which offered a good position paying twice what he earned at his current institution. He planned to take up that offer five years down the road, when he would have completed 20 years of service with his current institution and therefore be eligible to retire.

PubO1 shared the same view as PubO2 regarding the comparison with their students' salaries:

> *Sometimes I feel a bit weird when I see my students who graduated two or three years ago, and they are earning sometimes twice my salary.*

Other Omani academics compared their salaries with those of non-Omani academics. PrivO1, who holds a PhD degree and worked at a private HEI said:

> *Sometimes, an expatriate with a bachelor's degree here has the same salary as me. Expatriates with master's degrees get more than Omani instructors with a PhD. There should be a clear policy and transparency.*

Also, a comparison was made by an expatriate academic working at a public HEI who thought that Omani academics were paid more than expatriates:

> *Salary must be different, I am sure, because Omanis are not given housing. But I have no complaint about that.* (PubE2)

However, she felt that the salary for lecturers was very low and she considered herself lucky because of the low exchange rate from which she can benefit when she transfers money to her own country.

From the above, it can be summarised that Omani academic staff working in public and private institutions were dissatisfied with their salaries and some of them made it clear that they would leave their position within a few years. On the other hand, some expatriate academic staff at public and private institutions were satisfied with the salary they received and some were not.

### 2. ***Fringe Benefits***

The interviews revealed that the current fringe benefits provided by institutions might have represented an incentive mainly for non-Omani academics. The non-Omanis' views were centred on the attractiveness and equity of the fringe benefits received from their institutions. As mentioned in the section above, PrivE5 received a larger salary and better fringe benefits at his current institution than he had previously received working in other countries; these represented incentives to move to his current institution. PubE2 identified the fringe benefits she received as being health care and annual airfare to her home country for her and her family, in addition to furnished accommodation. She considered these decent enough incentives to stay because it meant that these expenses did not come out of her salary. She asserted:

> *Even though my salary has not increased, I always feel that at least for what I am getting, I am not spending a lot here so I am able to save some money. Otherwise, I would not stay here, I would go back home.*

PubE1 further emphasised what PubE2 mentioned about the treatment academics enjoy at her institution. She cited the fact that medical issues of all kinds, including serious diseases and heart problems, are treated for free. Moreover, she was content with the equity of treatment:

> *Irrespective of whether you are Omani or you are an expat, you get the same treatment. It is very, very fair.*

On the other hand, most of the Omani academic staff members who were interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the fringe benefits they received from their institutions, commenting on the unattractiveness and inequity of the benefits. They complained that there were no bonuses or rewards even if they performed extra work, as PubO4 pointed out:

> *We do not get any benefits even if we work more hours, if we work during the weekends, if we work whatever additional hours, we do not get any bonus, we do not get any reward, we do not get anything. It is only your salary and that is it.*

PubO4 added that in her institution, academics did not have health insurance. Indeed, academics in public HEIs do not get health insurance, being instead treated in public health centres or hospitals. In the interviews, Omani academics expressed their dissatisfaction about this issue and they demanded health insurance for them and their families. PubO1 commented on the health care they received:

> *We do have a clinic here, but again people sometimes feel it is very difficult to get an appointment, they have to wait too long to get appointments.*

She added:

> *These are free health services, we get them as Omanis, so I do not think there is a difference whether you get it from a hospital here or from another public hospital. Maybe expatriates will feel better about it.*

PubO1's assumption that expatriates might feel better about receiving free health care is supported by the two examples cited earlier in this section of expatriate academics who were indeed glad to get free health care. However, another expatriate participant supported what PubO1 said about the difficulty with getting appointments. PubE3 stated that after waiting six months for an appointment, he then had to spend three hours in the waiting room. Evidently upset, he added:

> *They know it is their responsibility to treat faculty members and they should not waste our time. This surely causes dissatisfaction.*

He was highly dissatisfied with the delay and he shared those emotions with the researcher as this incident had occurred on the day of the interview. In fact, it was because of that delay that he was unable to make it to the interview at the agreed time. He said that it was fortunate that this had happened at a time when he did not have classes; otherwise, the delay would have led to classes being cancelled.

In addition to the previous concerns voiced by Omani academics, they also compared themselves with non-Omani academics in terms of the benefits expatriates received, which they believed to be unequal:

> *We do not get education fees for our kids like other staff who are from outside Oman. They get more benefits than us. So this is really annoying. Why do we not have the same packages, why do we not have the same benefits?* (PubO4)

The Omani participants also compared the benefits they received with the benefits provided by other institutions:

> *Some institutions give their staff benefits that are better than the salary. These benefits include medical insurance, children's education fees and entertainment clubs. These enhance your loyalty to the institution. We are jealous of other institutions.* (PubO3)

PubO2, who works for another public HEI, supported PubO3's statement. He also mentioned that at his institution, there was no employees club (see the 'Autonomy and Work Environment' section), no health insurance, and no provision of children's education fees to study at private schools. He added that his brother worked for a petrochemical company that offers all of these benefits to its employees. He compared the benefits that his brother received with his own:

> *He has two kids. The company pays 50% of their school fees. He gets full health insurance for him, my mom, his wife and children, while we do not get this.*

Thus, he was thinking seriously of moving and he had already received a good offer from a university in another country, as mentioned previously in the 'Salary' section.

PubO4 explained that, as she is a woman, this situation was fine with her; but if she were a man, she would definitely look for another job with a better salary and benefits. To contextualise her point of view, it is important to mention that in Oman, men still tend to take on the greatest responsibility for covering the family expenses; but if women work, they can also help out with this responsibility. In addition, PubO4 gave three examples of colleagues who had left her department to join private companies because they had been offered better pay and benefits.

Some of the academics working at private HEIs were also dissatisfied with the inequity of the fringe benefits. For instance, PrivO1, an Omani academic working at a private HEI, compared the benefits Omanis received at his institution with those provided to non-Omanis:

> *Medical insurance is not granted to Omanis' families, unlike expats' families. Plane tickets are granted for expatriates, their spouses and kids, but not for Omanis. The end-of-service bonus is only given to expatriates, although both get the 3% annual increase in salary. So Omanis feel it is unfair.*

PrivO1 was dissatisfied with the discrepancies in salary (see the 'Salary' section) and fringe benefits between Omani and non-Omani academics. Moreover, he was angry when he mentioned that there were inferior financial and non-financial incentives for Omani academics at his institution. Thus, he stated that he might leave his institution soon. Later, when the researcher visited the institution, this academic was found packing his things to leave (more details about PrivO1's views on non-financial incentives are given in the 'Leadership and Supervision Skills' section).

It was not only the Omanis who identified inequity regarding certain fringe benefits. PrivE4 also indicated, with her eyes full of tears, that at one point, she had wanted to leave. It happened when the institution she worked for moved from directly providing accommodation to granting compensatory money instead. She explained:

> *So for all other faculty members, they gave the same amount and for me they made it half. When I asked them, 'Why is it that you are giving the others the same amount and you are giving me half?', their answer was, 'Your salary is high.'*

This did not just affect her at that time, but has still remained with her. The tears in her eyes were good proof of that.

To sum up, fringe benefits represented an incentive for most of the expatriate academics in public and private HEIs to remain in their current positions, whereas most of the Omani academics were dissatisfied with their fringe benefits and indicated that if they found a job with better benefits, they might move.

### 3. ***Promotion***

Promotion can represent one of the most significant incentives when it comes to retaining academic staff, while lack of promotion could lead to resignations. This is especially true since salary raises are associated with academic promotion at all public HEIs and at some private HEIs. Thus, without being promoted, a staff member's salary only goes up by the small incremental increases that come with a basic salary. The financial crisis that accompanied the oil market collapse led to the suspension of promotions at all government institutions in Oman – including at public HEIs – as of 2014. This ruling applies to all staff working at these institutions, both administrative and academic. This decision was made because academic promotions at public HEIs are accompanied by raises, and the government was not in a financial position to cover such expenses. Most of the participants working at public HEIs expressed their dissatisfaction with the suspension of promotions. PubO4 stated:

> *Promotion has been stopped for a long time because of the budget. So people are frustrated because even if they are eligible and fit the promotion criteria, they cannot*

*apply. So if they are not promoted, then they have to look for other opportunities elsewhere.*

PubO1 also commented on the unavailability of promotion, saying:

*Although promotions were always tough to get and not all people got them, promotions were stopped even for people in academia.*

Academics working for private HEIs were also affected by the global financial crisis. According to PrivE4, academics who apply for promotion may get it, but without raise. She added:

*I feel it is not justified. There should be financial support for that. Then what happens is people start looking for jobs elsewhere and retention becomes difficult. They move out immediately and they get a better position in any other university.*

PubO5, an associate professor at a public HEI, mentioned that he had stayed at his institution because he aspired to be a full professor:

*I have an ambition to get the full professor degree. I have the right to apply this year. I have good research publications, community service and teaching progress.*

He added that the suspension of promotions might lead him to leave the institution because it made it difficult to fulfil his ambition.

Likewise, PubE3 commented on the consequences of suspending promotions:

*If the teacher makes significant progress and does so much research but the institution does not promote him, he will probably leave.*

Furthermore, academics working for public HEIs used to be promoted to assistant professor immediately after obtaining a PhD, but because of the financial crisis, this has also become difficult:

*Some staff got their PhD, but they were not promoted to assistant professors. Those who have completed 20 years of service may retire here and move to private colleges.* (PubO5)

PubO5 mentioned that the only thing that might prevent academics from moving to another public institution is that academic and financial promotions were also suspended there. However, if they have completed 20 years of service, they may retire from their public institution and move to a private one. In this case, they would receive their pension in addition to the salary they earn at the private college.

Another perspective on promotion is related to the promotion criteria itself. To discuss this issue, it is first worth mentioning that promotion criteria at all HEIs, whether public or private, are based on three main elements: teaching, research, and community service. The weighting of these elements differs among institutions. Five of the academics interviewed at public HEIs expressed the belief that research was the most heavily weighted factor. According to PubO1:

> *We feel that promotion is mainly based on research, but at the same time, the institution looks for us as academics to serve in three different areas: research plus community service plus teaching. Then when it comes to promotion, they mainly look at research.*

Therefore, she suggested that:

> *If promotions are just based on research, maybe the teaching load and the expectations of community service should be reduced.*

Also, she argued that the criteria for promotion were highly subjective:

> *Like, for example, they say you should be good at research; so how many papers do they expect from you? Also, maybe you think that you are excellent at research and another person thinks you are not. So I do not think it is really 100% fair.*

PubO2 supported what PubO1 mentioned about the subjectivity of promotion criteria:

> *There is only one problem related to research itself: How do they assess it and who is normally judging you?*

Also, he commented that the criteria are unfair because they are difficult to meet, especially with a large workload:

> *I think with the atmosphere we are living in here, it is not fair. They demand more than the normal person can offer. It is really hard to achieve what they are asking for.*

He added:

> *If the atmosphere was really good here, you would need four years to get promoted, five years maximum. But with this system, maybe you will need eight years at least.*

Another participant also commented on the criteria and how they were hard to achieve with a large workload:

> *They ask for the criteria but when you give somebody a big load of teaching, then they say, 'No, you did not do any research.' This is because I had to teach this much! If you consume all your time teaching and marking, okay, you are a good teacher but this is not the only thing counted for promotion.* (PubO4)

PubO3 had a similar view as he believed that a large teaching load prevents academics from doing the required research:

> *It is unfair. If you promote me according to my research, then allow me to be a researcher!*

In addition, some participants believed that there was inequity regarding the criteria for their promotions and the criteria for the promotion of administrative staff members:

> *There is no equality with the administrative staff, who are promoted periodically. If I worked as an administrative employee, I would have been promoted three times in the past 15 years. That is why academics who get the chance to be in administrative positions refuse to come back to academia.* (PubO3)

From his point of view, administrative staff are promoted purely based on length of service, regardless of whether they have added anything to the job, while academics need to have research published in good international journals. He added:

> *Therefore, some lecturers spend their lives making tremendous efforts in teaching but do not get promoted because they did not get to publish in such prestigious journals.*

PubO1 also compared academics' promotion prospects with those of administrators:

> *For administrators, promotion is clear. They have it every three or four years, it is automatic regardless of whether they have done well or not. But for us, even if you are doing very well in teaching and all that, if you are not doing research or if your*

> *research is not very good, you will never be promoted, and of course your salary will not increase.*

The above comments show that even though promotions had been suspended for everybody for a long time, academics still compared their promotion prospects with those of administrators and identified inequity and unfairness.

This section has demonstrated that the views of the participants on the subject of promotion focused on unavailability, lack of transparency, lack of clarity, unfairness, and inequity.

In brief, Omani and non-Omani academics working in public and private HEIs were dissatisfied with their promotion prospects, and, hence, this might represent a factor for leaving their current positions.

### 6.3.2 Non-Financial Incentives

This section will consider the non-financial incentives that were found to affect academic staff retention and whose absence could lead to resignation. These factors are: leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, recognition and appreciation, prestige, stability, and Oman and Omanis.

1. ***Leadership and Supervision Skills***

Half of the participants expressed their satisfaction with the different aspects of leadership and supervision skills they experienced in their institutions, such as treatment, communication, and involvement in decision-making. Most of those participants worked at private HEIs and are expatriates.

Among the interviewees who reported positive impressions of their supervisors, the way they were personally treated was the key factor. PrivE2 described her institution's management:

> *The management is very friendly, very nice, and our head of department is very considerate and very flexible.*

Also, PrivE4 described her dean as:

> *…very cooperative, very motivating and all the time he talks about the unity of the college and how to work together.*

Other academics liked their institutions because the management was communicative, supportive and helpful:

> *Getting your ideas and initiatives realised and recognised is something that I like about this institution. All the initiatives, as long as they are for the benefit of the students, are supported.* (PrivO2)

Thus, the way that leaders treat and communicate with their academic staff could affect whether or not the employees remained at the institution. PubE2 expressed her gladness that her college dean had been changed, as the working environment had improved accordingly. She mentioned that they had not previously been allowed to share their opinions, but that the situation had changed. She described the previous dean's treatment of the staff as 'horrid'. As a result, she had thought about leaving the institution at that time:

> *Things were so absolutely horrid here that I wanted to run away from the college. The level of anxiety was provoking. I do not know whether to call it "fear-creating". That was very, very difficult for us in the college. You did not want to come to the college.*

The other aspect of leadership that mattered to the academic staff members was their involvement in decision-making, which was a significant factor in shaping the participants' opinions of their institutions:

> *There is one thing I want to say: 'Involve them'. This is a key point in all the process. Here, faculty members are taken into consideration in all the decision-making process.* (PrivE3)

Similarly, PubE1 was pleased to have regular meetings with the management to discuss different issues:

> *We have regular meetings and there are a lot of issues that are brought up and problems that have not been addressed.*

She added that when there are problems that are not addressed by the course leader, academics can always go to the person in charge of the programme. If the problem is still not solved, they can go to the director and bring it to his or her notice:

> *So there is a kind of hierarchy which is maintained and followed and it is not a passive hierarchy. Like this chain is very active.*

This highlights another important issue for academic staff members, which is the chance to directly communicate with the top management of their institutions:

> *If I want to meet the president or the vice presidents of the institution, I can go straight to them. No one stops you from meeting them.* (PrivE3)

In addition, if rules were changed against people's wishes, the academics felt glad when the management explained the reasons behind the changes using nice language:

> *The management is so kind here that they have a meeting to explain to the staff why we have to have these classes and why almost every teacher will have two classes every week which are from 4-6pm.* (PubE1)

Another participant added that the management works hard on the rules, regulations, and guidelines. PrivE4 stated that the language used to publish all the guidelines is very nice, and that rules and information are conveyed in a transparent manner from top to bottom:

> *We follow the same pattern everywhere so whatever discussion we have in the college board, we have the same discussion in the department board; the same information goes to all faculty members, so there is a lot of transparency. Because of this, the college seems to be working well.*

In contrast, another participant expressed annoyance at the delays in the decision-making process:

> *If you want to make any changes, sometimes the approvals take long time.* (PubO1)

In addition, PubO3, who worked at one of the public HEIs, believed that academics should be involved in the decision-making process, not only within the institution, but at the national level. By encouraging this participation, he argued, academics would feel valued and would stay longer in their institutions. He suggested:

> *The institution should organise gatherings with prestigious personalities in the country. If the staff take part in the decision-making process, they will feel valued and choose to stay in the institution.*

He added:

> *Academics here are not allowed to start collaborations with other institutions or universities. Anything that the country wants to develop should be investigated by academics working at universities. We are not just teachers, and our capabilities should not be undermined.*

Furthermore, good leaders were identified as those who listen to their staff, as this is an indication of good communication skills. This was emphasised by several academic staff members, and PrivE2 mentioned it when she talked about the things that she liked about her institution and her head of department:

> *The head of department listens to us, so we have no issues with her. So for that, I am very happy.*

PubO3 emphasised the importance of communication between management and academics on issues important to them, saying this would increase retention:

> *It is necessary to seek the experience of the academics themselves and ask them about their retention and how it may be increased. Listening to the academic staff will enhance their satisfaction.*

Also, he asserted that the institution should not let its academics resign easily:

> *If someone wants to resign, we should discuss it with them, find the reasons and try to solve these problems.*

In addition, PubO4 was annoyed with the poor communication of the management in matters that are important to academics, such as research. She mentioned that when she had finished her PhD, nobody had been interested in learning anything about her thesis – not even the head of her department. She considered it the role of the department head to call a meeting for all the department's academics at which she could give a presentation about her thesis. When this did not happen, she personally invited the head of her department and her colleagues for a seminar about her thesis. Even though she had taken the initiative to approach them, after the seminar, nobody talked to her about the thesis or sought to collaborate with her on further research. She added:

> *I think as we are fresh PhD holders who just came back from studying, they should take our hands and find a collaborator with us to establish our research.*

Likewise, some academics commented on the skills of the management:

> *The leaders here are very qualified. In our institution and especially in our college, the attrition rate is very low.* (PrivE3)

PubO2 also commented on the experience and skills of the leaders:

> *There are really amazing leaders in this institution, but the rest are just people who want to uphold the same regulations. They do not really look forward to the future of this institution.*

He suggested that the institution should rethink its criteria for the selection and recruitment of its leaders. He stressed:

> *Being a good researcher does not mean being a good leader.*

To illustrate what he meant, he stated:

> *Being a good researcher means writing good research, spending time on this and reading books really well. Leadership is something different; [a leader] takes part in the community, he looks forward a lot, he knows what we need in the future. He talks to people, to decision-makers, not just to books.*

Another issue that was raised by PrivO1 is the interference of the Board of Directors in the financial and administrative affairs of the institution. He emphasised that:

> *The ship needs a single captain. The role of the Board of Directors in decision-making should be bounded by clear regulations. This problem is in all private colleges. I hear that other colleges are worse.*

Also, he made a distinction between power and leadership, explaining that leadership is more about listening to others and changing your mind if you are wrong:

> *We should differentiate power from leadership. Power means giving orders regardless of the best interests. Leadership means listening to others and changing your mind when you are wrong. This ensures the job satisfaction of the employees.*

He believed that power should be given to the college's Academic Board:

> *The power should be granted to the Academic Board, including the dean, his assistants, heads of departments, representatives of the local council, and representatives of the students' consultation council.*

As mentioned earlier in the 'Fringe Benefits' section, PrivO1 was dissatisfied with the financial and non-financial incentives at his institution. Thus, he stated his possible intention to leave soon after. Later, when the researcher visited the institution again, he was found to be packing his things to leave.

In summary, most of the expatriate academics working at public and private institutions expressed their satisfaction with the leadership and their supervision skills at their institutions. On the other hand, there were some aspects of the leadership and supervision skills with which some Omani staff were satisfied and other aspects with which most of the Omanis in public and private HEIs were dissatisfied.

### 2. ***Continuing Professional Development***

Continuing professional development is an incentive that was mentioned by almost half of the participants. The opportunity for career growth and professional development, and the regularity and equity of such opportunities, were the main aspects on which the participants focused. Some Omani academics had joined public HEIs in order to be able to continue their higher education:

> *I was always thinking of commencing my further studies: master's and PhD. So that is more applicable in academia than in a private sector or other public organisations.* (PubO1)

Another Omani academic felt grateful to the institution for sending her abroad to obtain master's and PhD degrees. However, she was dissatisfied with the professional development offered after she had completed those degree programmes:

> *I do not have any other training courses. I am teaching, do I get any courses in teaching? For example, how to teach students, how to approach students, how to develop a new curriculum?* (PubO4)

Furthermore, aspirations to reach a higher academic position could represent a reason for staying at an institution:

> *I have an ambition to get the full professor position. I have the right to apply this year. I have good research publications, community service and teaching progress. I think moving to the private sector would be risky.* (PubO5)

In addition, PrivO2, an Omani academic working at a private HEI, seemed to be very satisfied with the level of continuing professional development offered at his institution:

> *I think I am privileged to be here. I improved my academic skills, my professional skills, and my leadership skills. That is what I like most about being here.*

He also mentioned that the institution's support for professional development was both internal and external:

> *Internally, within the institution, people are asked to have seminars and workshops, or if we want to hold festivals or conferences.*

And externally:

> *If there is a conference somewhere and I have a paper to present, all the people in charge will approve it and support it.*

Another academic staff member working for the same private institution supported PrivO2's opinion:

> *They provide me with good opportunities to go to conferences, training and workshops. They provide me with research funding and some international conferences to attend to enhance my learning and capacity-building. This shows that the institution is very good.* (PrivE5)

Furthermore, the equity of the opportunities for academic growth was something with which non-Omani academics were satisfied and might constitute a reason for their retention. PubE1 asserted that she, as a non-Omani academic, received the same opportunities for academic growth as Omani academics as long as she worked hard and proved that she was qualified. Also, she emphasised that there were constant opportunities for professional growth:

> *I do not feel any need to move because I am constantly growing.*

Another expatriate academic staff member who worked for the same institution emphasised the availability of continuous and fair opportunities for professional development. She mentioned that they sometimes had external lecturers come in for one week to teach them about new concepts in education, like critical thinking, simulation, etc. She added:

> *Initially, I thought I would go to the Gulf to make money, but when I came here I realised that it is not just about the money. I did grow a lot because of the things that I got to learn. That is one of the reasons I want to stay here. Developing your staff can be an incentive for them to stay.* (PubE2)

Regarding the equity of professional development opportunities, she said:

> *I am glad that the institution does not look at us as expatriates and say, 'Oh, they do not need opportunities for development.' Everybody has an equal chance.*

On the other hand, three of the Omani academic staff members who were satisfied with some aspects of the professional development opportunities at their institutions, such as the opportunity to continue their higher education, were not satisfied with other aspects. Also, three other Omani academics and one expatriate expressed their dissatisfaction with the continuing professional development provided by their institutions.

The first issue that was emphasised by the academics was the inappropriateness of the work environment for conducting research. They cited the high workload and the lack of collaboration between colleagues as contributing factors. In fact, the difficulty of carrying out proper research was a concern expressed by most of the academic staff members interviewed (this issue was discussed thoroughly in the 'Promotion' section). PubO2 stated that:

> *I feel that I teach and I do a lot of administrative work, but not research. You can do research, but not real research.*

PubO4, a newly qualified PhD holder, argued that her head of department should take the initiative to find a research link between fresh PhD holders and experienced researchers (see the 'Leadership and Supervision Skills' section). She also talked about the lack of training courses available to academic staff members at the institution, as was pointed out at the beginning of this section.

The other issue raised was the difficulty of attending conferences, especially after the financial crisis in 2014. In some institutions, if academics wanted to attend conferences, they had to pay their own way. According to PubO5:

> *Faculty participation in conferences is not easy. They have to pay for attendance. Before 2014, each member had the right to attend one conference with all the necessary funding in addition to the right to a vacation to attend a second conference.*

He emphasised that this was no longer possible and had negatively affected the academics' enthusiasm for conducting research. He also indicated that PhD holders were not given the chance to attend training courses for development and that priority was given to administrative staff.

PubO3 supported what other academics said about training courses and conference attendance, adding that priority was given to administrative employees:

> *The administrative employees have better opportunities to attend conferences and courses because they are smaller in number.*

The above demonstrates the sense of unfairness and inequity felt by academics when comparing themselves with administrative employees. PubO1 described an experience she had had in this regard when she had been interested in attending one of the conferences related to her specialisation. She was told by the management that in order to attend, she had to present a paper. However, because she had a great deal of things to do at that time, she could not write a paper. Later, she found out that some administrators had attended that same conference without presenting papers. To her, this represented unequal treatment of academic staff and administrators.

Another important issue for the academic staff members was keeping up with global developments in education and in their particular areas of specialisation. When opportunities to keep abreast of the latest developments do not exist, academics can be dissatisfied with their institutions:

> *Faculty members never want to stand in the same place. They like to be stable in terms of location, but not intellectually. We always need to feel that we are developing continuously. If you do not move forward, you are falling behind.* (PubE3)

He added:

> *In fact, the idea of not developing is scary to us as academics. To be honest, the environment here does not support this.*

In addition, the aspiration to be professionally developed in terms of holding higher leadership positions might be another reason for leaving an institution. PrivO1 indicated that he would not stay in the same position for a long time. He thought that he should take his skills to work somewhere else and leave his position for another person. He believed that by doing this, he would learn more and also contribute to the institution at which he worked. He added:

> *My ambition is to be a dean or university president in the future.*

To sum up, continuing professional development was an incentive for Omani academic staff to join and remain at a public HEI during their early career phases because of their ambitions to continue their higher education. However, this diminishes later on as a result of certain other factors, such as a sense of inequity, and the lack of training and conference attendance opportunities. On the other hand, the situation is different for non-Omani academic staff as continuing professional development represents an incentive for them to remain at their public and private HEIs. The feelings of equity and the opportunities for professional development are the main reasons.

### 3. ***Autonomy and Work Environment***

Almost all of the participants mentioned some aspects of autonomy and work environment as representing incentives for them to stay at their institutions. Specifically, flexibility, freedom, nature of work, and a good environment were referenced by most of the academics. However, most of them also expressed their dissatisfaction with certain elements of these aspects, as well as with other aspects such as inequity and workload. As a result, the interviews support the findings from the quantitative data analysis that academic staff might leave their institutions because of these factors.

Having autonomy was considered one advantage of being academic by some academic staff members, although the extent to which autonomy is practised differs from one institution to another. PubO3 cited not having a direct boss as a perk of being a lecturer:

> *The advantage of being a lecturer is that you get to be your own boss. This differs from administrative jobs, where your direct boss controls every move you make.*

PubO4 stated that being an academic at her institution implies dealing with students and research only, and not constantly being guided by a boss. She explained that while she does have a boss, there is no direct guidance or monitoring from him, and he only focuses on the main tasks of the job:

> *There is no one monitoring when you come and when you leave, what you do exactly and what you should do. The boss observes you generally, if you are doing your job or not. If you are doing your job, then he will not interfere.*

Freedom and flexibility when choosing the curricula for the courses and updating methods of teaching, examination, and evaluation represent another aspect of autonomy practised at some institutions. This aspect is one of the things that academic staff liked about their jobs because they felt that they were given the confidence to take responsibility for themselves and their work:

> *I can make changes in the programme that I am teaching and it is accepted, it is welcomed. I am given a free hand to do that. So what more could a teacher ask for?* (PubE1)

PubE1 also indicated that even if she taught the same programme to different groups of students, she was able to make changes to suit the different students' needs. PubO3 shared the same opinion, saying that he could add to the content and enrich it. However, as none of the additions he made were included in the exam, students did not care about those materials. He added:

> *I believe that I – as a teacher – have the right to prepare the final exam for my students and not only the mid-term. I do not even see the questions before the exam day.*

In addition, he had to report to the head of department or head of programme in matters related to the syllabus because the syllabus is mandatory. This issue annoyed him:

> *If academics are given choice in matters related to syllabus, exams and attendance hours, they will be better retained.*

By ‘attendance hours’, he meant he should be given the freedom to choose the best times for his lectures.

Two other academics supported PubO3’s view regarding the lack of freedom they were conceded when choosing course content and teaching methods. PubO5 mentioned that because the same course was taught by different lecturers, they do not have the freedom to change the contents:

> *Academic freedom is not available. For instance, I may find this content more useful to my students, but others have a different opinion. So I do not have freedom.*

He also complained that online teaching was not common at his institution:

> *E-learning is not common here. We use the Blackboard system; the course is uploaded online and the exams can be conducted online. However, not all staff use this system.*

In addition, PubO4 indicated her frustration at academics in her department preferring to apply traditional teaching methods because it is easier for them to do so:

> *I am trying to learn how to apply artificial intelligence when teaching courses. People here know about artificial intelligence and they know that we can do online exams but we still do them in the old ways.*

Although academics can rarely choose the times of their lectures, being an academic does provide some flexibility in terms of working hours. In other words, working hours in some institutions depend on teaching timetables, office hours, and research hours, and hence the academics believed that they had some level of flexibility in terms of timing:

> *If you have something on outside of work, you can manage that thing because you can go and leave the institution at any time and work later from home. That is something that I really appreciate.* (PubO4)

At other institutions, there was a specific number of hours for which the academics were required to work, e.g. 7.5-hour days. However, they had the flexibility to work five hours one day and eight hours the next:

> *I have the flexibility. I can come late when I do not have a class at eight. I can come at nine o'clock, but I have to stay for seven and a half hours.* (PrivE2)

Another aspect that some academics mentioned enjoying is the nature of the work itself, particularly teaching:

> *What I like about teaching is that you keep meeting new generations with new thoughts and ideas.* (PubO5)

Also, PubO2 indicated that he really liked his job because it was not as routine as some other jobs:

> *There is a practical side of my work, which is really nice and normally changes the atmosphere. I really like my job and what I am doing. I really like it.*

In addition, PubO2 mentioned that being an academic gave him the opportunity to interact with the community and participate in community activities, such as giving workshops outside the institution or writing newspaper articles related to his field. He saw the nature of his job as unique, enjoyable, and not routine. PubO5 shared a similar view:

> *I am happy about teaching and I like the job environment as we are used to the place, the colleagues, and the work requirements.*

Similarly, one of the key aspects of a good working environment are the students themselves. Half of the academic staff members emphasised that the students were one of the main factors for staying at their institutions. The respect and the hard work of their students were cited as the main things they liked about them:

> *Working here, the students are very good. They respect teachers.* (PrivE1)

PubE1 supported that, saying:

> *The thing I like a lot is the inborn respect the students have for the teachers. Maybe it is a cultural thing that they give so much respect to elders, but I find all the students, boys and girls, extremely respectful.*

The second thing PubE1 mentioned liking about her students was their work ethic:

> *The other thing that I like very much here as a teacher is how hardworking the students are. I can give the same writing back to a student to rewrite it and the student takes it back without any grumbling or any complaint, and will do his or her best to write it again.*

The third thing she liked about her students was their commitment to attending class:

> *One of the things I like very much is that there is almost 100% attendance. There are very few absences. It helps you with your teaching a lot when you have a full class day after day. This really helps you improve the programme you are teaching.*

In addition, PrivE3 mentioned that what made his experience different was that the majority of students he taught were females, which made him feel that he was contributing to empowering women:

> *Here, 95% of students are females, which is very good because empowering women is the best way to empower society. If a man studies, it is good for his family, but if a woman studies, it is good for society. This is an important thing which I like about this institution and one of the reasons I am staying as long as possible.*

Although most of the academics were satisfied that their students were intelligent and hardworking, PubO3 argued that in the last few years his institution had been accepting academically weak students, which made it harder for teachers to teach:

> *The institution now accepts students with weak achievement [levels]. It accepts students with 55 or 60% on the secondary school exam. This is more tiring for the teacher. We face problems with these students and even their families.*

Furthermore, half of the participants identified the work environment, such as the colleagues with whom they work, as one of the key things they liked most. This was applicable to both public and private HEIs, and expressed by both Omani and non-Omani academics. They emphasised that they were like a family, not just colleagues, and they helped each other when they felt under pressure at work:

> *The environment itself is a really good environment. You feel like a family when you compare your relationships with the colleagues and the students. So I think it is a very peaceful environment to work in. That is what I like about it.* (PubO1)

Also, the academics liked the diversity of their work-places:

> *In the department, we have a variety of nationalities, backgrounds and cultures, so I feel that is very enriching. In my day-to-day interaction with them, I feel professionally and academically satisfied.* (PrivO2)

However, sometimes colleagues' actions can be a nuisance. PrivE4 gave an example of the lack of cooperation among some lecturers when working in a team:

> *For example, it is a team job and you ask them to prepare a file or collect all the documents, but it is one person collecting all the documents and the rest are not helping out. They either delay or give you rough work or work of low quality.*

Another participant mentioned that when he worked hard on something, he felt that his colleagues were not happy with that:

> *Sometimes you feel you are an outsider. Everyone finds you weird. Therefore, sometimes I feel I have to do these things at home so that other staff do not think I am doing it as a show-off.* (PubE3)

Another problem relating to autonomy and the work environment that more than half of the participants spoke about concerned their workloads:

> *It is too much. I am a lecturer and a researcher. Academics are mainly researchers who teach based on the research they do.* (PubO3)

From the above statement, it can be seen that PubO3 felt he should be able to focus more on research and teach his students based on that research. PubE3, an associate professor, also confirmed that he and his colleagues had heavy teaching loads and thought that he should be given the chance to focus on research and teaching postgraduates:

> *To be honest, I think they should decrease my teaching load. I think I am more useful in research. I should teach postgraduates. If there were enough autonomy and I had the choice, I would teach postgraduates. It is important to give the lecturers the choice of what to teach.*

He added that, to some extent, they did have some freedom over the choice of courses they taught. However, the lack of sufficient numbers of qualified lecturers forced them to cover the entire schedule. He also described the work pressure:

> *The institution assumes I am working from 8 am until 10 pm! I get 12 teaching hours but the actual working hours are 40 to 45 per week. The recorded hours of the lecturers are 12 hours. However, our true working hours are over 80 hours.*

He explained this further:

> *For example, if my student sends me something and needs feedback, it takes time to do the necessary research and read the student's work and give feedback.*

Also, PubE3 compared the teaching hours associate professors teach at his institution with the teaching hours associate professors teach at other HEIs outside Oman:

> *In other universities, associate professors work six hours. So why do they have six hours and get paid more than those who work for 40 hours? My point is that the institution environment, in general, is not well set up for the lecturer to do his role perfectly.*

The workload is also high for those academic staff who hold leadership positions at HEIs because they have teaching hours along with the responsibilities associated with their respective positions:

> *I see it is a lot. Because when you hold the position of assistant dean, you teach a half load; so one semester I teach one section and another semester I teach two sections. In the semester when I do two sections, I feel that I am really overloaded.* (PubO1)

She explained that by saying:

> *Because teaching means preparing for class, going to the class, preparing examinations, doing the marking. It is lots of things, so I end up taking some of my work home to be able to finish it.*

Furthermore, many academics stated their belief that a lot of their administrative work should be done by someone else, such as by coordinators. As PubE3 stated:

> *I, as a faculty member, believe that some duties should be done by someone else.*

PubO2 elaborated further on this point:

> *We are not supposed to do so many administrative tasks here in this institution. Sometimes I consider myself a coordinator, like I am not really an assistant professor. My job description is different from what I am actually asked to do here.*

Another issue is the sense of inequity that participants felt when they compared their situation with the situations of others, either outside or inside the institution. An example of a comparison with other academics outside the institution was cited earlier when PubE3 compared his situation as associate professor at his institution with associate professors' situations at institutions outside Oman. The following examples are from academics who compared their situations with those of other academics inside their institutions.

PrivE4 felt a sense of inequity because of the unfair distribution of courses and projects:

> *Master's courses and projects, and undergraduate projects should be equally distributed. Those people who are working hard should not be given more work. So because they are doing well, you give them more work!*

In her view, academics who work hard were given a heavier load. PubO4 shared this opinion:

> *In my department, if you work harder, they will ask you for more things. If you do not work and you do not want to teach, they cannot force you. So the load is mainly on some staff while the other staff do not have that much of a load.*

PrivE4 stressed that the workload could be a reason for leaving her institution as she had left her previous job in her country because of her heavy workload. In her previous situation, she had not had time to take care of her children and she ended up leaving her job and looking for another one with a more manageable workload. When interviewed, she found herself in a similar situation:

> *I am coming back to the same situation that I had back home, the reason why I left my home job. The same situation I feel now.*

Similarly, academic staff members compared themselves with other employees working for other organisations in terms of their access to activities and recreational facilities. Four Omani academics mentioned entertainment clubs as one of the things that should be available to academics and their families, as they are to the academics at other institutions:

> *Some institutions give their staff benefits that are better than a salary. These benefits include medical insurance, children's education fees and entertainment clubs. These enhance your loyalty to the institution. We are jealous of other institutions.* (PubO3)

PubO2, who works in a different institution, echoed PubO3's complaint. He gave the example of his brother who worked for a petrochemical company that offered all of these benefits to its employees:

> *They do have an employee club, a really great club and they spend time there. There are a lot of activities for them. We do not have activities for us.*

In brief, almost all of the Omani and non-Omani academic staff participating in this study mentioned autonomy and work environment as constituting an incentive to stay at their public or private institutions. They noted that they were satisfied with the autonomy they were afforded, the flexibility in working hours, and the good relationships they had with their colleagues. However, many academic staff members were dissatisfied with some factors such as the workload. Also, some Omani academics were dissatisfied with their relative lack of access to activities and recreational facilities compared to other organisations.

### 4. ***Infrastructure and Resources***

The availability of appropriate and continuously improving infrastructure and resources was indicated by four non-Omani academic staff members as one of the things with which they were satisfied at their institutions:

> *The institution enables us to deliver lectures directly or through e-learning, which includes lectures recorded in advance and live lectures. I love continuous development and this is made possible by this institution. (PubE3)*

In addition to PubE3, two academics working for the same institution mentioned that whatever facilities and services they order, they receive immediately. They stressed that the people responsible for responding to requests at their institution were very cooperative. For instance, if they needed transportation to take their students on an educational trip, they could contact the transport department and everybody there would be cooperative. They also gave examples of the resources available for students and for them as academics, such as desktop computers, online access to scientific journals, computer labs, and technical assistance:

> *I would think we are lucky in terms of resources. I feel I have not seen [elsewhere] this amount of resources for students and for us. We get the facilities we order.* (PubE2)

On the other hand, two Omani academics who worked for another institution were dissatisfied with some aspects of the available infrastructure and resources. PubO3 was dissatisfied with the size of the academics' offices:

> *Our office is a 3×3 metre room shared by four instructors. How can we receive our students? There is no privacy for doing any work.*

It is worth mentioning that the researcher saw this in her visit to the institution and wondered how such a small room could accommodate four people.

An issue mentioned by another participant was the perceived lack of educational resources for activities such as field trips:

> *A field trip can save us the trouble of explaining several lessons. However, these trips are restricted due to budget cuts. The students therefore face a problem with training.* (PubO5)

In summary, four expatriate academic staff working at public and private HEIs mentioned infrastructure and resources as an incentive given the availability of appropriate and continuously improving infrastructure and resources. However, two Omani academics working at the same public HEI and one expatriate academic working at a private HEI expressed their dissatisfaction with the available infrastructure and resources.

### 5. Recognition and Appreciation

Only two academics, who worked at different private HEIs, expressed their satisfaction with the recognition and appreciation provided by their institutions. One of them was very happy to show the researcher an award she had received from the institution as recognition for being best head of department. She said she felt that it was worth 1,000 Omani Rial (approximately £2,000).

The other participant mentioned that his institution was doing its best to recognise faculty. He added that recognition and appreciation at his institution can take different forms:

> *Sometimes the institution will reward [staff] financially, sometimes by promoting them to another position, sometimes by praising them and by thanking them, and by involving them more in decision-making.* (PrivO2)

On the other hand, five academics expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of recognition and appreciation shown at their institutions. PrivE2 mentioned that although her head of department generally says ‘very good’ when she does well, she has not seen such signs of appreciation from top management for her long years working at the institution:

> *I have worked here for 11 years but nobody said, ‘Oh, you were here for 11 years, you worked for me for 11 years, you did a great job!’ Nobody said that. I want that kind of acknowledgment. I brought so many changes to the department after my PhD, but nobody even said a word.*

PubO1 indicated that when academic take on extra work, there should be some form of appreciation shown. This appreciation does not necessary need to be monetary; it can consist of different forms of recognition:

> *Sometimes you work extra, or you do something you feel that it is not 100% your responsibility. So maybe you can have incentives. I do not mean just money, but maybe to recognise your work, give you a certificate or send you to a workshop to enhance your skills.*

However, PubE3 argued that a “thank you” is not sufficient recognition and appreciation. It should be reinforced by actions:

> *All people of all ranks need to feel appreciated. Highly educated people may be offended if their supervisor says, ‘Well done, thank you.’ They need to feel from your behaviour that they are appreciated.*

According to PubE3, if a supervisor says ‘thank you’, this means he has only just noticed the good work the academic does. Otherwise, the supervisor would need to thank the academic every minute of the day, which is not possible:

> *Instead, they should decrease the administrative work that I do, because it should be assigned to demonstrators or assistant professors, not associate professors like me. I do not need a thank you. They can also give me more time for research. Our job is not just teaching. I am an associate professor; it is a high rank and I should be a research team leader. We should be involved in the country’s development projects. Only then will I feel appreciated.*

He also added:

> *I believe that the main factors affecting expats are the community, salary and appreciation. Instead of thanking the staff or giving them acknowledgment certificates, it is best to assign them responsibilities that truly match their job descriptions. This is the true appreciation.*

Moreover, PubE2 began crying during her interview when recounting the lack of recognition she had received. She felt that the institution had ignored the long years she had spent teaching there. She reported being told by people in the personnel department that her contract would not be renewed beyond two years because she was not conducting research. She stressed that she was not interested in doing research, as teaching was her passion. She also indicated that recognition is given to those holding PhDs, regardless of their experience or contributions to the college:

> *Most importantly, I feel now that experience is not recognised. If you have a PhD, you are everything. It does not matter what you have contributed to this college or what experience you have gained. So that is something that I do not like, but I am learning to live with it.*

Similarly, PubO2 also stated that there was no appreciation at his institution:

> *I cannot see any appreciation. I cannot see it. I am not that person who tries to fill in three or nine pages to win an award, or to win recognition from some section of this institution or from the administration. But I am a person who would love them to see that I am doing something special, something unique. But this is not here. Not in this institution, no, no, no.*

He indicated that he had never been appreciated and the only thing that he had ever received during his time at the institution was a recognition email from the dean for a report that he wrote which was not part of his responsibilities. He was happy to mention that:

> *This one was unique to me, you know? They did read that and consider it. And the next day, I received an e-mail saying that he sent it to two departments inside the college and saying, 'Yes, this work is really nice.'*

However, he emphasised that he was always forgotten. For example, while the department always arranges a party when new lecturers are appointed, but there was no party for him when he was appointed. The same happened again when he obtained his master's degree and then his PhD, despite the fact that the department always celebrates when academics finish their graduate studies. He revealed that this had happened many times, including on an occasion at which the faculty had gathered for a dinner. He commented:

> *I am fine, you know. I told you I do not care much about these things. But at least recognise me, I am here. This is what we really need: good recognition. Believe me, not always financial.*

He stressed:

> *The basic stuff I have talked about: recognition. There is nothing, you do not feel you are valuable here to this institution, and you know that you are very valuable outside.*

In brief, only two academic staff members expressed their satisfaction with the recognition and appreciation they received from their institutions; whilst both were working at private HEIs, one of them was Omani and the other one was non-Omani. Another five academics were dissatisfied with the lack of recognition and appreciation they received at their institutions; these participants were a mix of Omanis and non-Omanis working at both public and private HEIs.

### *6. <u>Prestige</u>*

Working for one of the best and most well-known higher education institutions was one of the incentives that motivated the participants to work for and remain at their institutions. In particular, working for reputed institutions provided the academics with a certain level of prestige in society:

> *Being an academic here is highly appreciated by society.* (PubO2)

However, PubO2 added that this was the only thing that encouraged Omani academic staff to stay at the institution:

> *There is nothing in this institution that would really hold them, except, in my opinion, the social privilege you have when you are a doctor here.*

This is the reason that he refused a job offer from another organisation that offered a salary increase of approximately 350 to 400 Omani Rial (£700-800) per month.

The flip side is that prestige can also constitute a factor that encourages people to leave their institutions. According to PubO5, academics might consider leaving their institutions for one with a better reputation. He added:

> *Moving there is not much better financially. However, some people find it more prestigious to work there or believe that they can find better chances at their community services, as all these conferences and external committees count as part of the community service.*

Likewise, academic staff members might leave the teaching profession after holding a leadership position and enjoying the prestige and facilities associated with that position. PubO3 illustrated this point:

> *Lecturers who get to be a dean and enjoy the facilities provided to deans find it difficult to come back to teaching. Some people find it hard to accept that. Even society sees it as if you lost your rank after you were the dean.*

To further illustrate this point, it should be noted that at some institutions, positions like dean, assistant dean, and head of department are held by academic staff members for a fixed period of time, not permanently. When they hold those positions, they are given a lighter teaching load. However, after finishing that period, they are expected to return to their original role as an academic only. Some of them find it difficult to part with the prestige they enjoyed when in their previous position.

In short, prestige might represent an incentive for both Omani and non-Omani academic staff members to work at public HEIs. Also, some Omani academics might leave their less prestigious institution to join a more prestigious one.

### 7. ***Stability***

Academic staff members might stay at their institutions because they prefer the stability of remaining in one place rather than moving around. PrivE6 stated his preference to stay at his institution for as long as possible as he had become used to the system, work environment, and colleagues. He noted that if he feels stable at one institution, there is no point in moving to another. Therefore, he wished to work for the institution for more than 10 years:

> *Just going from here to there, we do not find the right place to work. So there is no point in having that kind of attitude. If the environment is suitable for you, if you can do the work properly, if you feel that your colleagues are very friendly with you, and if your family supporters are also here, certainly I will choose to work over here for more than 10 years.*

Also, feelings of stability might sometimes lead academic staff to commit to their institutions. According to PubO5:

> *I am happy about teaching and I like the job environment as we are used to the place, the colleagues, and the work requirements.*

This shows that PubO5 felt stable in his work environment and was committed to his institution. He also confirmed this commitment in another statement:

> *I am loyal to this institution and to teaching. I can start my private consultation business, but I am loyal to this place. I have good experience in my field and I want to offer it to my students. I know their needs. That is why it is hard for me to leave here. I had the chance to go back to the ministry, but I chose to come back to my students.*

It is worth mentioning here that one of the factors that makes some Omani academics prefer to work for a particular institution and stay there longer is its geographic location. Some Omani academics prefer to work for institutions located in the cities where they were born and where their families live, as this provides them with social stability. PubO5 illustrated this sentiment:

> *Most faculty members who choose to work here do so because they want to stay in their home city.*

However, he stated that if he were moved to another city and felt unstable, he would leave the job, start his own business, and teach part-time at another institution in his home city:

> *The most significant factor if I decided to leave here would be the instability that would be caused if I am moved to another place next year. I might give up my dream to be a full professor. Perhaps I would give it a try, but if I felt unstable socially, I would give up my dream, and I might start my own business or move to another institution to teach part-time.*

Also, geographic location could lead some academics to leave institutions located in small cities and look for a job in one of the HEIs in Muscat, the capital of Oman. This is what was indicated by PrivE4, who works at an institution located in a city far away from Muscat. She explained the reason:

> *Probably, we look for a better life style because Muscat is a bigger city.*

Furthermore, when people get older, they seek stability and are less inclined to move from one institution to another:

> *I think at a certain age, when you pass 50 or whatever, you kind of want stability and you do not want to be unstable.* (PubE2)

Another form of instability that might lead to resignation is the difficulty of obtaining children's visas. PrivE4 and PubE1 mentioned that they were not thinking of going back home. However, the only problem that might force them to leave Oman was the difficulty of obtaining visas for their children. In other words, they might leave Oman if they felt socially unstable:

> *I do not think of going back. But I am also a little worried about the visas of my children because now they are grown up and I have an unmarried daughter with me. So if I have to get a visa for her, probably I might think of shifting because we cannot stay away from her.* (PrivE4)

To understand this situation, it should be clarified that when expatriate academics' children turn 21 years old, they get a three-month visitor's visa, which can be extended by an additional month. After that, they have to leave Oman for a certain period of time and reapply for a visa. This is sometimes difficult for academic staff members because they might not have a home somewhere else. Therefore, they have to rent a room in a hotel or apartment where their children can live during their stay outside Oman, which is usually expensive for them. At the same time, they are worried about their daughters living alone, as PrivE4 observed. This instability might lead them to look for another country where the visa procedures are easier and their children can stay with them permanently and without hassle.

To sum up, stability represents an incentive for some Omani and non-Omani academic staff members to remain at public and private HEIs. Conversely, feelings of instability might lead them to resign.

### *8. Oman and Omanis*

One of the most significant factors that motivate expatriate academics to stay longer at their institutions is Oman and the Omani people. In fact, all the expatriate academics who participated in this study mentioned that they chose to work for their current institutions specifically because they are located in Oman. In addition, it was commonly stated that once they had come to Oman and met the Omani people, they preferred to stay rather than to go back to their home countries or look for a job in other countries. Through the interviews, it was found that most of them wanted to stay in Oman for as long as possible and had no intention of returning back home.

Almost all of the expatriate academics interviewed gave the same answer when they were asked about the reasons for selecting their current institutions:

> *Actually, it is Oman that I selected.* (PrivE4)

The reasons for choosing to work for institutions located in Oman can be summarised in four reasons. Peace and safety is the first thing people look for when applying for jobs outside their countries. PrivE2, who had worked in Oman for more than 10 years, mentioned that she initially moved to Oman because her family was there; but she was subsequently impressed with the peacefulness of the country:

> *When I came, I liked it so much because it is so peaceful.*

PrivE4, who had applied for jobs in different countries and received offers from all of them, asked her friends to help her decide which country she should choose:

> *I asked my friends and the people around me who were in those countries. They all told me 'go to Oman', and so I came here. They told me that it is a very peaceful country and what you are looking for is relaxation in your life. You want to work, but you want to work in a peaceful environment, so go to Oman.*

The second reason for choosing to work for institutions located in Oman is the country's environment and nature, and the availability of different facilities. According to PubE2, Oman itself is a beautiful country and the quality of life is better than what is available in her home country. Also, Oman is not far from her country, so visiting is convenient during holidays:

> *The country itself is a very nice place. It is not very crowded. The quality of life compared to where we come from is very good. Plus, it is close to home. It is not far away like being in the US or Australia.*

Another participant who worked as a professor in a private HEI had been in another country before searching for a job at an Omani institution. He indicated that the environment and facilities in Oman are very good:

> *Here, there are very good facilities in Oman in terms of food, sanitation, and environment in terms of greenery. So all the facilities are good.* (PrivE5)

Another aspect that the interviewees cited as being attractive about Oman was the availability of education for academics' children:

> *My children's education was here only, they found good colleges here. If they were not able to find schools and colleges, probably we would have to return back, but that is one remarkable thing about Oman: there are many higher education institutes and they accommodate even the expatriates. So that was a good part of this.* (PrivE4)

The third reason cited was that Oman accommodates and respects people of different faiths. Although Oman is a Muslim society, it respects people of all faiths. Therefore, some of the academics who may have been uncomfortable in their countries of origin had been living in Oman for many years. Indeed, some of the academic staff members interviewed had worked for HEIs in other countries where they had been paid double the salary they received from their current institutions in Oman. However, they had left those institutions and chosen to move to Oman. For example, PubE3 had worked for an HEI in a Western country, but he and his wife thought it would be preferable to raise their children in a Muslim country. They never considered going back to their home country because they believed that it was not the best place for their children. They started thinking of different options and asking their friends. He recounts:

> *Oman was always the best choice because we believed our children would fit in easily.*

When he was offered a job at an Omani HEI, he signed the contract without even checking how much the salary was. He emphasised that the salary had never been his priority:

> *I never changed the university I work in just to get a higher salary. I used to get double the salary I get here. Maybe other staff have reasons other than the community, but I am sure we will all agree that the salary is not everything.*

According to him, raising his kids in a moderate Muslim country is the most important factor:

> *For me, I feel I have a religious responsibility towards my kids. I came here because I want them to be raised in a Muslim environment, at least during their early years. I would like them to get a Western education but in a Muslim environment.*

Two of the participants were female academics from the same country but belonging to different religions. They emphasised that they could not live in their own country because of their communities' perception of them and the harassment they experienced from people there.

PubE1 said that she wanted to stay in Oman for as long as possible, emphasising that going back to live in her country of origin would be impossible:

> *It is actually not only unsafe, but it is not possible for me to go back because I am a Muslim and things are very different now. The whole environment has changed a lot and they are very hard on Muslims now. I am very concerned about my daughter and my son.*

She indicated that the situation in Oman was different. She felt comfortable and safe in Oman, unlike in her home country. She explained that she, as a woman, could move freely without any trouble in Oman:

> *Now more than ever, I think things are not conducive to being there comfortably, but here I even forget that I am a woman. You know? Seriously! I actually prefer to go shopping after 10 pm. When I go at 10 or 11 in the night, I shop and come back at 12, driving. I am very comfortable, nobody troubles me. No motorists trouble me on the roads. I feel so safe and so protected. It is unbelievable.*

She indicated that this was not only her opinion but that she believed that other people would agree:

> *I think there are a lot of people who feel the same way. I know of one particular lady who was there and then she came here, and she said, 'You know my salary was double what I am getting here but I am so happy that I am not there and I am here.'*

PubE1 mentioned that she often wondered about the reasons why some of her colleagues had left other countries to take lower salaries in Oman:

> *So obviously it is not the financial incentive that is so important for people. I think the larger picture is much more than just finances. Finances are very important, of course, but it is much more than that.*

Similarly, PrivE1 had come to Oman after her husband had passed away and she had found it difficult to stay in her country because of the harassment she experienced from the community as a widow. Thus, she moved on the advice of her brother, also living in Oman. She emphasised the good treatment she received from the Omani community compared to how she had been treated by her original community. She confirmed that even if she had to leave her current institution, she would never leave Oman, but would instead look for a job in any other Omani institution:

> *To be fair, I will never take the step to leave Oman. I will find a job. Because Oman is a very different country, very peaceful and the people are very good.*

She stressed:

> *I want to be here. That is it. Many are telling me to move to another country where I can make more money, but I do not want to.*

Another female participant supported the previous female academics' views regarding the freedom they experienced in Oman. PubE2 mentioned that they, as female expatriates, like to feel free in practices related to religion, driving, and other important things to them. She indicated that they were comfortable in Oman because they had all these freedoms:

> *Because we come from outside, we like to have our freedom and our practices. We are happy because the country allows us to do what we want to do, and that is a very nice thing because whether it is religious or whether it is driving, we as women have freedom and that is another important thing here.*

The fourth reason for choosing to work for institutions located in Oman concerns the Omani people themselves. PrivE3 said that he had applied for jobs in different countries, receiving offers from institutions in Germany, Japan and Oman. His uncle, who had worked in Oman for 20 years, advised him to come to Oman. He recalled his uncle's recommendations:

> *If you are coming to any of the Gulf countries, come to Oman. It is the best place and Omanis are very friendly. I am not saying any bad things about other countries, but Omanis are friendlier. If you are focused and hardworking and sincere, your growth is assured.*

PubE3 also described his impressions of Omanis:

> *Omani people are very friendly. They are welcoming. Omanis are a calm people. They adhere to Muslim traditions. They are more considerate towards others in their community.*

In addition, he described how quickly his wife and children had become involved in Omani society:

> *Three weeks after I moved here, my wife was already friends with the entire neighbourhood. She is very comfortable here with the Omanis, maybe even more than she was in our home country. My kids are also involved in the society as if they had been born here.*

Likewise, PrivE5 confirmed the previous academics' views about Omanis:

> *Omanis are very helpful and they support me. They are very good and very friendly and if you want something, they help you. I feel there are no gaps between local*

> *people and foreigners. So, I really like it here and I want to stay for more five, 10 or maybe 20 or 30 years.*

PrivE4 mentioned that her initial plan was to stay in Oman for two years, but that once she arrived, she found that she liked Oman and Omanis, and had therefore never considered going back to her home country:

> *Initially, I had a plan to be here for two years, but I like the country a lot. The people are humble, so positive, full of energy, so respectful that I never thought of going back again.*

She emphasised:

> *Even when I get offers in other countries, I do not go. I love to be in Oman. This is my choice.*

PubE3 stressed that:

> *The Omani community is an attractive factor that can be exploited by the institutions to retain expatriates.*

This suggests that, along with the other incentives discussed previously, the Omani community could also be exploited by institutions wishing to retain expatriate academics, as Omanis and their community comprise the series of positive elements cited above.

In brief, Oman and the Omanis were found to represent an incentive for all expatriate academic staff members to remain at their institutions for as long as possible.

## 6.4 Rating Incentives

The participants were asked which incentive type they considered most important – financial or non-financial – in retaining them as academic staff. The majority indicated that both financial and non-financial incentives were very important, believing that a mix of both types was essential to retaining staff. PrivE4 mentioned that if an institution gave only non-financial incentives, the staff would eventually become saturated with that type. The same would happen if academics received only financial incentives. Therefore, a mix of both financial and non-financial incentives was deemed to be important:

*I think both. You cannot say only one works. So, non-financial means it can keep you for a few years but at a point after that, you need financial incentives. So you can say it is a mix of both financial and non-financial. It should be a very good combination of the two.*

She also stated:

*We, as faculty, do not usually ask for very big raises or to be paid for every task. No, that is also not correct. For everything academics do, you give them money: that is also not correct. But making a combination of the two is correct.*

At the same time, PrivE4 emphasised that academics should receive financial incentives such as promotion, as well as rewards for major achievements, such as publishing in prestigious journals:

*At least for the big things, they should offer financial incentives, like for promotions, good publications or good results from the students.*

PrivE5 stressed the importance of both types of incentives, noting that he was satisfied that he received both from his institution and that he would be disappointed if this were not the case. He gave an example of a financial incentive he received:

*If I did work here like research and I did not get any reward, I would feel very bad. I work very hard and I put my institution's name on it. On sites like YouTube, LinkedIn, Scopus, I put my research there; people open it and see the name of my institution. So if I do hard work and the institution does not provide a reward, I will be disappointed.*

He also gave an example of a non-financial incentive provided by his institution:

*Second, I do extra work like working on quality control. Quality control is not an easy job; so much documentation, so much thinking and contact with other teachers. So if it is not supported by the institution, it will not be supported by other teachers and that will be disappointing. So in terms of these facilities, it is very good and our dean is very helpful when we need some documents, to go somewhere or to attend a workshop.*

PubO3 agreed that both types of incentives are important:

> *All people like non-financial incentives. However, financial aspects are indispensable. They do not cancel out the need for non-financial incentives, but they are necessary.*

He illustrated that financial incentives are as important as non-financial incentives, stressing also that the salaries of academics should be reconsidered:

> *Some people think that the salary we receive is so big, but it is not. We are educating generations all across Oman. I think they should reconsider the salaries of the academic staff. Some institutions give their staff benefits that are even better than their salaries. These benefits include medical insurance and children's education.*

While PrivE6 mentioned that he considered both incentive types to be important, he felt that 65% of the importance should be placed on financial incentives and 35% on non-financial incentives. He explained the reason for this distribution:

> *Because everyone living in the world needs money. Without that we cannot get anything, and we cannot live.*

He added:

> *But in that sense, we should not focus only on the money. For instance, if we are getting more salary but there is no rest, there is no peace of mind. Even if you go to your family, you are not able to spend or share some time with your family members. So what is the use of getting the money and one eventual day you will get hypertension and a lot of diseases, which will take your money!*

PubE2 also stressed that both incentive types are important. However, she also suggested that more financial incentives should be given:

> *More finance should be there. Like there should be a reasonably good incremental raise every year.*

Sometimes, regardless of the amount of money that might accompany a form of recognition, an award itself (like “Teacher of the Year”), makes the academic feel recognised. PubE2 emphasised that such incentives had previously been provided but had since stopped, and that they should be reintroduced:

> *I do not know what happened here. In the good old days, I used to get bonuses and I got rewards twice because of my performance. Whatever the money was, it felt good that somebody recognised that I am an outstanding person. It made me feel, 'Oh I am wanted in this place, and they know that I work very hard.' That stopped long ago. That was like at the end of 2010, 2011. Since then, we have not seen anything.*

PubE2 also gave examples of non-financial incentives that make academic staff feel that they are important to their institutions:

> *Non-financial incentives like being the head of committees, being called for your opinion, or getting some continuing education courses. I mean these are good things that keep us motivated.*

Also, PubO2 confirmed that both incentive types are important. He indicated that financial incentives might not just consist of a direct raise; they could be provided in indirect ways, too:

> *Both, I always believe both. Believe me, if the financial, for example, stays like now but when you write research, when you contribute something, you receive something financial but in a different way. It is not that your major salary goes up directly, no, there is a different way.*

He added:

> *We understand that the number of academic staff members is huge, and raising salaries might be difficult these days. However, they could do something different to retain them. You can appreciate what they do. Give them room to be creative, to add to this institution. For example, show recognition of their name. I need them to know that this person does this and thank [them] by name.*

Thus, he emphasised the importance of non-financial incentives, arguing that their effects remain with people long after they have been received:

> *But the recognition you receive is also unique and stays longer. You feel it longer. I felt this when I received that letter from the dean. You know, it gives me chills whenever I read it. It is something basic. It is just a letter he signed. But this makes me very happy. This is what we need. We need to invest in this more.*

According to PrivO2:

> *I think both are important, but sometimes even if the financial incentive is not up to the employee's expectations, but there are other types of incentives or privileges available to the employee, then the employee I think will be satisfied and will stay in the job.*

He gave an example to support his belief:

> *Say, for example, somebody is expecting 1,800 in salary, but is getting 1,500. However, when they come to work, they are happy all day. They see the support of their supervisor or director, their colleagues are very supportive. The daily functions are very smooth so they are not tired or upset or disappointed when they want this or that or they want to do something. So I think there are many other reasons or factors that will compensate if there is a shortage in the financial part.*

He summarised that by saying:

> *So I feel both are important. Very low financial compensation will not attract anyone. And high financial compensation but with a very low or unacceptable or uncomfortable working environment, employees will also leave the job even if they have high salaries.*

Furthermore, PrivE3 illustrated that people often think that incentives in the form of salary are enough; but he felt that incentives in various forms are necessary:

> *Often, people think that salary is enough; but incentives in any form, not necessarily in the monetary form, incentives in the form of a certificate or anything that is going to help the employee in delivering his/her best.*

He insisted:

> *Both are equally important. We have a young family with young kids, so we want to build a future for them. So, number one is financial incentives. I am not saying huge incentives like what Microsoft, Facebook and Google are giving. We want incentives apart from the annual incentives raise of 3%.*

He added:

> *The incentives can be financial as well as non-financial. Sometimes, the job is very demanding, and you cannot go back and talk to your family for two days just because of the work, especially during the last month before final exams. All faculty members will be very busy. During that period, any sort of incentives would drive us.*

However, PubE3 stressed that he had never changed institutions for financial reasons:

> *I never changed the university I work in just to get a higher salary. I used to get double the salary I get here. Maybe other staff have reasons other than the community, but I am sure we will all agree that the salary is not everything.*

He confirmed that:

> *There are many other factors that can enhance faculty retention even if other institutions offer better salaries. I believe it is a whole package of factors, not only the salary. I believe that the main factors affecting expats are the community, the salary and the appreciation.*

He explained what he means by “appreciation”:

> *Instead of thanking the staff or giving them acknowledgment certificates, it is best to assign them with responsibilities that truly match their job descriptions. This is true appreciation.*

Also, he stressed the important role that job security plays in retaining expatriate academics, arguing how a 10-year contract could make them feel secure and encourage them to help the Omani generation they are teaching become qualified to replace them at the end of the period:

> *If they follow the strategy I told you and give me a 10-year contract, they will have qualified Omani lecturers at the end of that period. They will not even need me after that. So they should consider these kinds of non-financial incentives, which are actually tangible. For example, job security is not money but it is tangible as I will not worry about my children's education.*

On the other hand, PubO5 stated that non-financial incentives are more important because the financial status of academics is better than that of the administrative staff:

> *Academically, non-financial incentives are more important because the academic staff have a good financial status compared with the administrative staff.*

He provided examples of non-financial incentives that he considered more important than financial incentives:

> *Academic freedom is an important factor. College teachers should be given enough trust to differentiate them from school teachers. Unified course syllabuses are important, but there must be more academic freedom.*

In addition, PubO5 pointed out the importance of other facilities, such as common rooms to meet guests, administrative coordinators to help the academic departments, research tools and resources like videoconferencing, activation of e-learning through teaching online courses, and coordinating with entertainment clubs and certain airlines to get discounts for the staff.

PrivE1 supported PubO5's opinion that non-financial incentives are more important, arguing that you cannot satisfy everyone when providing financial incentives:

> *I would not go for financial. Financially, you cannot satisfy anyone. Give them appreciation, that's more than enough. Call a meeting, call everyone and give them a certificate or a memento. That will be worth 1,000 riyals. That will be the best. Not the financial, which I will not agree with at all.*

She added:

> *I got the award for the best head of department. I am very happy. This year they gave 100 riyal or something. This 100 riyal will be spent but this award will be there with us always, so not the financial.*

PubE1 said that financial incentives are important, but non-financial incentives are the most important factor. She noted that as long as she is comfortable and satisfied with her work, it does not matter how much money she gets:

> *So obviously it is not the financial incentive that is so important for people. I think the larger picture is much more than just finances. Finances are very important, of course, but it is much more than that.*

She emphasised:

> *I believe we can survive with a little money, but money does not give us happiness and it does not make us feel comfortable.*

Another participant also stated that she always preferred non-financial incentives:

> *I always say to the dean that more than the financial is the non-financial. I always tell my head of department and my colleagues that I look for non-financial incentives.* (PrivE2)

She illustrated:

> *I like the non-financial: the appreciation, acknowledging your work. I like these things. For me, these are more important than getting a raise. It motivates me if I get a higher salary, it definitely motivates me, but this is something internal, you know: nobody knows what I get. I will not tell anybody that I got this much as a raise. But if I am getting an appreciation, everybody sees this. So I like that: the non-financial.*

Likewise, PubO1 stated that she preferred some forms of non-financial incentives or indirect financial incentives, such as financed workshops and courses outside Oman, as well as discounts on tickets with certain airlines.

However, PubO4 argued that financial incentives are the most important factor because everyone who had left the institution did so for financial reasons:

> *Financial incentives definitely, because everyone who left, left for that reason. If I go and ask everyone who left, they will say – especially the men – they will say, 'How can we afford to stay? I have my kids in private schools, I have to take them to private hospitals if they are sick. I want so and so.' The salary is not bad for him but he wants better. If he got a job opportunity with better money, he would definitely go. So this is what happens.*

## 6.5 Summary

This chapter has presented the qualitative data from the interviews with academic staff members. The qualitative data analysis and findings have provided a deeper understanding of academic staff members' perceptions and assisted the researcher in addressing some of the research questions, as this summary will highlight.

1) What are the financial and non-financial incentives that impact academic staff retention in higher education institutions in Oman?

Based on the qualitative data analysis, it can be said that most of the emerging themes coincided with those identified in the quantitative findings presented in Chapter Five. Specifically, the financial incentives found to impact academic staff retention consisted of salary, fringe benefits, and promotion. The non-financial incentives found to affect retention comprised leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, recognition and appreciation, prestige, stability, and Oman and Omanis. These last three incentives emerged exclusively from the qualitative data; they were not among the incentives presented in the quantitative findings.

2) What are the factors leading to academic staff members' resignations at higher education institutions in Oman?

The participants were asked about the factors that might lead to their leaving an institution. It was found that the incentives that encouraged academic staff retention were the same incentives whose absence might lead staff to resign. To be more precise, while some participants were satisfied with a particular incentive provided by their institutions, others felt dissatisfied and indicated that the lack of this incentive might lead them to consider leaving. For instance, fringe benefits represented an incentive for most of the expatriate academics to remain in their current positions, while most of the Omani academics were dissatisfied with the fringe benefits they received and indicated that if they found a job with better benefits, they might move.

3) What incentive type (financial or non-financial) has a greater effect on retention?

Academic staff members were asked clearly and directly to state which form of incentive was more important for them to remain at their institutions: financial or non-financial. The majority stated that both financial and non-financial incentives are very important and that a combination of both should be provided by institutions wishing to retain their staff.

4) How do characteristics such as institution type (public or private) and nationality (Omani or non-Omani) impact retention?

From the qualitative data analysis, it was found that institution type had no effect on staff retention. This means that the factors affecting retention were the same for academic staff working at public and private HEIs. The only factor that might be affected by institution type was prestige, as all of the academic staff who mentioned prestige were working at public HEIs. As for nationality: Omani or non-Omani, whilst the impacts on retention of some of the current incentives provided by the institutions were not affected by the staff's nationality, the impacts of other incentives were affected. The impact of factors like promotion, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, recognition and appreciation, prestige, and stability were not affected by nationality, whereas the influence of salary, fringe benefits, leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, and Oman and Omanis were affected. For example, Omani academics were dissatisfied with the current salaries provided by their institutions; in the case of the expatriate academic staff, some were satisfied with their remuneration and others were not.

Likewise, the fringe benefits currently on offer were perceived as being particularly attractive by expatriate academics, while they were less important to Omani academics. Whilst expatriate academic staff were satisfied with the leadership and supervision skills on display at their institutions, the situation was somewhat different among Omanis, with some being satisfied with certain aspects of leadership and supervision skills, but most of them being dissatisfied with other aspects. Similarly, the expatriate academics were satisfied with the continuing professional development available, whereas this represents an incentive for Omanis only during the early stages of their careers, while they still aspire to continue their higher education; the attractiveness of this incentive diminishes for them over time due to the scarcity of training courses and financed conference participations.

Likewise, Oman and Omanis constituted a significant incentive which improved the retention of expatriate academics, but was not mentioned by Omani academics.

In the following chapter, the quantitative and qualitative data findings will be drawn together and discussed through the theoretical lens adopted for the thesis. These findings will then be located in the literature.

# Chapter 7: Discussion of Findings

## 7.1 Introduction

Following on from the presentation of the quantitative and qualitative findings in Chapters 5 and 6, this chapter synthesises and examines the findings of both. The chapter will begin by recalling the study's purpose and objectives. Next, the quantitative findings will be compared with and illuminated by the qualitative findings. Then, the findings will be located within the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 and used to address the research questions. The findings also will be discussed through the lens of this study's theoretical framework, which was constructed by drawing on Two-Factor Theory, Equity Theory, and Expectancy Theory. At the end of this chapter, the main findings will be summarised in the context of the research questions.

## 7.2 Research Overview and Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore the impact of financial and non-financial incentives on academic staff retention. To achieve this aim, the following research questions were set:

1) What are the financial and non-financial incentives that impact academic staff retention at higher education institutions in Oman?
2) What are the factors leading to academic staff members' resignations at higher education institutions in Oman?
3) Which incentive type (financial or non-financial) has a greater effect on retention?
4) How do characteristics such as institution type (public or private) and nationality (Omani or non-Omani) impact retention?

To address the above questions, a mixed-methods design – specifically an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design – was used to gather the required data. The quantitative data were collected and analysed first, then, the interview questions were created based on or extracted from the survey questions to further explain and illuminate the results of the quantitative data and obtain a deeper understanding of the participants' views.

## 7.3 Theoretical Framework

This section discusses the findings through the theoretical lens adopted for this study. Because there are no theories that measure staff retention, Two-Factor Theory, Equity Theory, and Expectancy Theory have been adopted to understand what might affect academic staff retention. This section will briefly reintroduce each of these three theories, then consider the findings through each theoretical lens.

### 1. ***Two-Factor Theory***

Two-Factor Theory was developed by Frederick Herzberg (1959, 1966) to determine which factors make people feel good about their jobs and which factors make them feel bad about their jobs. He concluded that the work factors that affect employees' satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) can be divided into two categories: motivation factors and hygiene factors. Motivation factors refers to those factors that strongly affect job satisfaction, while hygiene factors are those that contribute less strongly to job satisfaction but must be present to meet an employee's expectations and prevent job dissatisfaction (Skripak, 2016).

Two-Factor Theory was adopted in this study to examine whether motivation factors are strong contributors to retention, and whether hygiene factors are not strong contributors to retention (see Figure 3.2 on page 46, which presents the hygiene and motivation factors according to the theory and shows which particular factors represent them in the context of this study).

As has been found in the analysis of the quantitative data, the multiple regression results show a strongly significant effect for salary and leadership and supervision skills (hygiene factors) and continuing professional development (a motivation factor) on retention. This indicates that satisfaction with these factors increases academic staff retention. Also, the descriptive analysis and the qualitative data findings emphasised the importance of the other hygiene and motivation factors on academic staff retention. Therefore, it can be said that categorising the factors into hygiene and motivation factors is not applicable in the context of this study because factors can affect retention regardless of whether they fall into hygiene or motivation groups. The presence of hygiene factors is likely to increase job satisfaction, not just alleviate dissatisfaction. Also, the absence or lack of motivation factors might lead to job dissatisfaction, not just lower satisfaction.

Based on the above discussion, it can be seen that a combination of financial and non-financial incentives is important for retaining academic staff. The incentives that satisfy some academics are not necessarily those that satisfy others. Also, the factors that lead to the dissatisfaction of some academics might actually lead to satisfaction for others, not just alleviate dissatisfaction, as Two-Factor Theory states; in fact, the presence of those factors might lead to full satisfaction for other staff members, not just alleviate the dissatisfaction.

People are not identical in their needs and views, as can be seen from the differences between Omani and non-Omani academics. There are some factors that satisfy non-Omani academics and are therefore likely to increase their intention to stay; for example, fringe benefits do not just decrease dissatisfaction, but can increase satisfaction and intention to stay. Another example is promotion, as both the Omani and non-Omani participants were dissatisfied with their promotion situation, with 53.6% of them rating it as a “very important” factor in their intention to leave. Thus, the absence of promotion did not just decrease their satisfaction, but also led to their dissatisfaction.

### 2. ***Equity Theory***

Equity Theory was developed by John Stacey Adams in 1965. This theory focuses on people’s perceptions of how fairly they are treated relative to others. When applied to the work environment, Equity Theory suggests that employees compare the job outcomes (salary, bonus, promotion, recognition, etc.) they receive for their job input (hours worked, education, experience, work performance) to those of other employees. The comparison might be with someone in a similar position, someone holding a different position in the same organisation, someone with a similar occupation, someone who shares certain characteristics (such as age, education, or experience), or with oneself at another point in time (Skripak, 2016).

Equity Theory was adopted in this study to examine the impact of equity or inequity on academic staff retention. The findings suggest that academic staff members compare what they receive for their job input with what other employees receive inside and outside their institutions. They compare themselves with their expatriate colleagues, with the administrative staff in their institutions, with employees holding similar or lower qualifications in other organisations, and with themselves at previous points in time. The findings show that expatriate academic staff members were satisfied when they compared the incentives they received with those received by Omani academic staff. These incentives include salary and continuing professional development. Their feeling of equity is likely to increase their intention to stay.

On the other hand, Omani academic staff members also compared the incentives they received from their institutions with those received by their expatriate colleagues. They expressed feelings of inequity when they compared the incentives they received, such as salary and fringe benefits, with those received by their expatriate colleagues. Their perception of inequity was cited as one of the main factors that made them dissatisfied and that caused some of them to develop the intention to leave.

The Omani academic staff also considered incentives like salary, fringe benefits and autonomy and work environment, comparing what they received in their institutions with what was received by employees working for other organisations, such as oil companies. Some of them wished for the chance to move to such companies, following in the footsteps of colleagues who had previously made the jump to another industry. They also compared their salary and fringe benefits with those received by their former students. In addition, academic staff members compared the promotion criteria to which they were subject with those faced by the administrative staff, despite the fact that all promotions were suspended at public HEIs because of the financial crisis. Also, academic staff members compared their workload with that of their colleagues or with the workload of academic staff in other countries, such as in Europe.

### 3. ***Expectancy Theory***

Developed by Vroom in 1964, Expectancy Theory assumes that employees believe that their efforts will result in acceptable performance, which will in turn lead to their earning the desired reward (Skripak, 2016). The reward here does not only refer to monetary incentives, but includes all forms of incentives (both financial and non-financial). From the quantitative and qualitative findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6, it can be seen that when the academic staff put effort and time into their work, they expect that they will receive appropriate incentives from their institutions. When this does not happen, their job dissatisfaction might increase, which might result in thoughts about leaving an institution. For example, one of the academic staff members complained that even when they worked from morning until night, they did not receive any reward. This indicates that when they worked long hours, they expected that they would receive something in return. The same is true for the remaining factors. For instance, when the academic staff members performed a task that was not mandated by their job description, they expected to receive either financial or non-financial incentives, or maybe both (e.g., reward, recognition, a workload reduction).

## 7.4 Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study will be discussed in detail in this section in order to address the research questions.

**Research Question 1: What are the financial and non-financial incentives that impact academic staff retention at higher education institutions in Oman?**

In order to address the first research question, the impact of each factor on retention will be explored through a discussion of the quantitative and qualitative findings.

**1) The Impact of Financial Incentives on Retention**

The impact of financial incentives – salary, fringe benefits, and promotion – on academic staff retention will be discussed in this sub-section.

1. ***Salary and Retention***

Salary (SAL) was measured in the survey based on adequacy, attractiveness, regularity, and equity. These considerations were therefore used to establish the impact of salary on the intention of academic staff members to stay at their current institutions. The descriptive analysis of the survey data indicated that there was no significant difference between the number of academics who were satisfied with their salary and those who were dissatisfied. This is evidenced by the finding that, after aggregation, the respondents' answers to the questions regarding what they considered important when assessing their salary, the mean of salary (3.133) was only slightly above 3.0.

However, the findings from the interviews facilitated a more nuanced analysis. Overall, the Omani academic staff interviewees working at both public and private HEIs were dissatisfied with their salaries, to the extent that some of them made it clear that they would be leaving their positions within the next few years. The reasons cited for their dissatisfaction were the inadequacy and unattractiveness of their salaries to meet their needs and aspirations. On the other hand, in the interviews, only a minority of expatriate academic staff members, again both in public and in private institutions, expressed dissatisfaction with the salary they received, whereas the majority were less concerned. Thus, it was the expatriate academics who indicated in the interviews that their salaries were adequate, with none of the Omani academics doing so. This is a significant finding.

The findings derived from the interviews revealed that the expatriate staff members received further benefits, in addition to their salaries, for themselves and for their families, such as free health care and plane tickets to enable them to make annual visits back to their home countries. In some institutions, they were also provided with accommodation, and their children's school fees were paid to allow them to attend private schools. These benefits represent considerable supplements to expatriates' salaries. Furthermore, the low exchange rate when transferring money to their countries of origin represents another advantage. A further significant finding is that the only point of dissatisfaction expressed by some expatriates was that they were not given salary raises beyond the small annual incremental increases to their basic salaries.

The perception of equity is one of the factors found to affect the participants' satisfaction with their salaries. The descriptive analysis indicated that 44.3% of both Omani and non-Omani respondents were satisfied with the level of salary they earn compared to their colleagues at the same institution with similar qualifications. This perception was clear when, during an interview, one of the expatriate academics stated that she felt quite comfortable when she compared her salary with her colleagues', although she also expressed her dissatisfaction at not having received a raise for a long time. This was not the case with some Omani academics when they compared their salaries with those of non-Omani academics. They believed that their expatriate colleagues received higher salaries than they did, even when they were less qualified.

Furthermore, a sizeable percentage of the respondents (41.4%) were dissatisfied when they compared their salaries with those of employees at other organisations with similar or fewer qualifications. Some Omani academics compared their salaries with employees working at private companies, particularly oil companies, expressing a belief that those employees earned double their salaries even if they had fewer qualifications. Sometimes, they compared their salaries unfavourably with the salaries earned by their former students, even though they felt happy about their students' success. The importance of perceptions of equity is one of this study's significant findings because it has a significant effect on academic staff members' intentions to stay or leave (see the consideration of Equity Theory in Section 7.3).

It can be seen from the above discussion of the descriptive analysis that opinions varied among the academic staff members, some of whom were satisfied with their salary levels, while others were dissatisfied; most of those who expressed dissatisfaction were Omanis. This explains why when the participants were asked directly whether the salary paid by their institutions increases academic staff retention, 32.2% agreed, while 38.5% disagreed. The type of institution (public/private) did not influence the results.

The Pearson correlation results confirmed that there is a positive correlation between salary and academic staff retention ($r = 0.373$). This means that when salary increases, academic staff retention increases. Furthermore, the multiple regression analysis proved that salary has a strongly significant effect on academic staff retention. It was found that satisfaction with salaries increases intention to stay by 0.19 points, and vice versa.

These findings contradict some of the previous research which argues against the association between salary and retention. For instance, Metcalf et al. (2005) found that salaries and other financial fringe benefits do not positively influence academic staff retention. Samuel and Chipunza (2013) also found that salary and related benefits could not be associated with the attrition of academics in universities. Nonetheless, the findings presented here are generally in line with the majority of research to date. For example, Oyagi and Kembu's (2014) correlation and regression findings indicate that monetary incentives (including salaries and fringe benefits) have a positive and significant influence on academic staff retention.

Also, Osibanjo et al. (2014), using structural equation modelling, and Hong et al. (2012), using multiple regression analysis, support this study's results in that they emphasise that compensation packages (including salaries and fringe benefits) are the fundamental consideration when it comes to lecturers' retention. Thus, research has shown that salaries and fringe benefits have a strong influence on the retention of academic staff (Chiboiwa et al., 2010; Mubarak et al., 2012; Musah and Nkuah, 2013). According to Tettey (2006), dissatisfaction with salaries is a key factor undermining the commitment of academics to their institutions and careers, and consequently reinforces their intent or decisions to leave.

To sum up, salary has a strong and direct impact on academic staff retention. This was demonstrated by the multiple regression, correlation, descriptive analysis, and qualitative data findings.

### 2. ***Fringe Benefits and Retention***

The impact of fringe benefits (FRB) was measured in the survey based on whether they were considered commensurate, competitive and fair. The quantitative results revealed that most of the survey respondents were dissatisfied with their fringe benefits, which was demonstrated by aggregating the respondents' answers, as the resulting mean was 2.309. This finding is supported by the results relating to the question which asked participants whether they were satisfied with the fringe benefits provided by their institutions. The percentage of the academic staff who were dissatisfied (52.3%) far exceeded the percentage of those who were satisfied (21.9%) with the fringe benefits offered by their institutions.

A significant finding revealed by the interview data is that most of the Omani academics in public and private HEIs were dissatisfied with the fringe benefits provided by their current institutions and indicated that if they found a job with better benefits, they might move. The reasons cited were the unavailability, unattractiveness, and inequity of the fringe benefits provided by their institutions. They complained about the lack of bonuses or rewards even when they worked from morning until night; hence, they considered these benefits to be below their expectations. This finding shows that the academics expected that their efforts and performance would lead to their earning the desired reward (in keeping with Vroom's Expectancy Theory, discussed in Section 7.3), but when this did not materialise, they seriously considered moving.

Also among the main concerns were the lack of opportunities for financed conference trips and training courses, in addition to the stoppage of scholarships in some institutions due to the financial crisis. Tettey (2006) also found that limited conference funding was among academic staff members' complaints as participating in conferences is essential for research and hence for career development. Similarly, Musah and Nkuah (2013) reported that academic staff members cited receiving scholarships for further studies as a key motivating factor that influenced their decisions to stay at a university.

Moreover, the Omani academic staff members who participated in this study expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that they were not provided with private health insurance, annual flight allowance, or private school fees for their children, all of which were benefits received by their expatriate colleagues and by employees working for large private companies. This reflects the Omani academic staff members' perception of inequity when they compared the fringe benefits they received to those enjoyed by others (see the discussion of Equity Theory in Section 7.3).

On the other hand, the interview findings revealed that fringe benefits is an incentive for non-Omani academics in public and private HEIs to remain in their current positions. This is because they received benefits such as private health care or health insurance and annual plane tickets to their home countries for themselves and their families, in addition to private school fees for their children. Thus, they were not required to take money out of their salaries for these expenses. From this, it can be inferred that one of the reasons that some expatriate academic staff members were satisfied with the salary they received is that they did not depend on their salaries to cover these fundamental needs. This finding is in line with the outcome of a study conducted by Tettey (2006). Tettey reports that despite the significance of salaries to academic staff, they are willing to accept lower salaries in favour of good benefit packages that cover such things as health care, car and housing loan schemes, support for children's education, and a reasonable pension.

As per the correlation, fringe benefits was found to have a positive relationship with academic staff retention ($r = 0.346$), indicating that when fringe benefits increase, academic staff retention increases as well. Fringe benefits were strongly correlated with continuing professional development ($r = 0.564$), and this might have affected the multiple regression results as financed scholarships and conference/workshop attendance are elements of fringe benefits that are considered essential to academic growth. Thus, it can be said that when continuing professional development is included in the multiple regression equation, fringe benefits are addressed indirectly.

Whilst Samuel and Chipunza (2013) and Metcalf et al. (2005) found that fringe benefits did not influence academic staff members' intention to stay or leave, in most other studies, fringe benefits were found to positively and significantly influence academic staff retention (e.g. Chiboiwa et al., 2010; Hong et al., 2012; Mubarak et al., 2012; Musah and Nkuah, 2013; Oyagi and Kembu, 2014; Osibanjo et al., 2014).

In summary, although fringe benefits were not among the factors that had a strong and direct impact on academic staff retention in the multiple regression analysis, fringe benefits were addressed indirectly through the continuing professional development. In addition, fringe benefits' importance was also emphasised through the correlation, descriptive analysis, and qualitative findings.

### 3. ***Promotion and Retention***

Promotion (PRO) was measured in the survey based on its availability, fairness, competitiveness, clarity, and transparency. According to the quantitative results, a significant percentage of the respondents (46.1%) were dissatisfied with the promotion opportunities provided by their current institutions, while just 24% were satisfied. This aligns with the mean ratings of the incentives, with the mean rating for promotion being 2.793, which indicates the dissatisfaction of many of the participants with this factor in their institutions. The interview data also revealed that both Omani and non-Omani academics working in public and private HEIs were dissatisfied with the promotion situation. Thus, it could be a factor in the academic staff deciding to leave their current positions. The reasons for their dissatisfaction were the perceived unavailability, lack of transparency, lack of clarity, unfairness, and inequity of promotions.

Whilst the promotion criteria at most HEIs are based on teaching, research, and community service, most of the academic staff believed that the criteria lacked transparency and clarity. They also believed that the criteria were unfair as they did not have sufficient time to undertake much research due to the high teaching and administrative workload. This is in line with the findings of Tettey (2006), who reports the widely held views amongst academics that the criteria and procedures for promotion can be very time-consuming. In addition, his findings revealed academic staff's dissatisfaction with the heavy weighting placed on research compared with teaching in promotion decisions. This is consistent with the findings of Metcalf et al. (2005) that fairness in promotion decisions was a major concern amongst academics which resulted in resignations.

The financial crisis caused by the drop in oil prices in 2014 affected the Omani economy and led to the suspension of promotions in all government institutions nationwide, including at public HEIs. The crisis did not just affect promotions at public HEIs, but private HEIs were affected as well. One consequence of the suspension of promotions was that salaries did not increase other than by small annual increments; this is because at all public HEIs and most private HEIs, raises are associated with academic promotion. Also, the suspension of promotions meant that academic staff could not attain higher academic ranks, which affected their continuing professional development. This is a serious issue because academics tend to aspire to obtain a higher rank as part of their professional growth. Although all promotions were suspended, Omani academic staff still felt a sense of inequity when they compared their promotion situation to that of the administrative staff. They considered the promotion criteria for the administrative staff to be clear and regular regardless of what they had done or the quality of their work (see the discussion of Equity Theory in Section 7.3).

The correlation analysis revealed that there is a positive relationship between promotion and academic staff retention ($r = 0.387$), indicating that when promotion increases, academic staff retention increases. Also, promotion and continuing professional development were strongly inter-correlated ($r = 0.674$), which reflects the dual relationship between these two factors as both of them are related to academic growth. Promotion is essential for academic growth as in order to attain a higher academic rank (e.g., associate professor, professor), an academic staff member must be promoted. Also, the continuous development of academic staff members through learning and training opportunities should be provided by the institutions as this is an essential requirement for being promoted. In addition, there was a strong inter-relationship between promotion and leadership and supervision skills ($r = 0.555$). Thus, it can be said that with the presence of continuing professional development and leadership and supervision skills in the multiple regression equation, promotion is addressed indirectly.

As was mentioned above, salary raises and higher academic ranks are associated with promotion at all public HEIs and most private HEIs. When academic staff members are promoted, they are given a new title accompanied by a raise. This is also reinforced by Ng'ethe (2013), whose findings indicate that promotion is a direct determinant of retention or resignation, while salary is not. Even though Ng'ethe's findings are the inverse of this study's, both indicate that there is an association between promotion, salary, and continuing professional development, and an improvement in one of them leads to improvement in the others. Thus, enhancing these incentives positively impacts academic staff retention. The positive and significant impact of promotion on retaining academic staff is also demonstrated by Oyagi and Kembu (2014). In addition, this is consistent with the findings of Metcalf et al. (2005), who state that expanding the opportunities for promotion may increase retention.

In summary, although promotion was not among the factors that was shown by the multiple regression analysis to have a strong and direct impact on academic staff retention, promotion is a very important factor when it comes to retaining academic staff as it is associated with salary and continuing professional development, both of which positively and significantly impact academic staff retention. In addition, the importance of promotion was emphasised through the correlation, descriptive analysis, and qualitative findings.

**2) The Impact of Non-Financial Incentives on Retention**

The impact of non-financial incentives – leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, recognition and appreciation, prestige, stability, and Oman and Omanis – on academic staff retention will be discussed in this sub-section.

1. ***Leadership and Supervision Skills and Retention***

The impact of leadership and supervision skills (LSS) was measured in the survey based on treatment, communication, and involvement of academic staff in decision-making. The descriptive data analysis indicated that the mean of leadership and supervision skills (3.131) was slightly above 3.0, which suggests that there was no significant difference between the number of academics who were satisfied with their leadership and supervision skills situation and those who were dissatisfied. Other quantitative data results reinforced this finding, as they indicated that the difference between the percentage of academic staff members who were satisfied (40.8%) and those who were dissatisfied (30.9%) was not large.

The results of analysing the interview data also supported these findings, as almost half of the interviewees expressed their satisfaction with the different aspects of leadership and supervision skills, such as receiving good treatment and communication from their supervisors and being involved in decision-making. Most of these satisfied participants worked at private HEIs and were expatriates. According to Musah and Nkuah (2013), good working relationships between academic staff and management are among the factors that can ensure staff motivation and retention. Dissatisfaction with relations with managers and with the degree of freedom allowed to use one's own initiative increased the likelihood of leaving the sector, according to the findings of Metcalf et al. (2005).

On the other hand, there were some aspects of leadership and supervision skills with which most of the Omani staff (five of the seven Omani academics interviewed) at both public and private HEIs expressed their dissatisfaction. These included delays in decision-making by top management regarding certain issues that require prompt decisions. Other concerns related to poor management skills, such as the lack of new ideas to improve their institutions, and interference from the boards of directors in financial and administrative affairs at the private institutions.

The academic staff were also annoyed by their lack of involvement in decision-making, both within their institutions and at the national level. This contrasts with the findings of Hong et al. (2012) on the impact of empowerment on academic staff retention; they found that empowerment is less fundamental to academics and therefore plays a negligible role in their retention. They argue that this finding might be attributable to the tendency in Asian cultures to conform to the dictates of higher authorities. However, this might not be applicable to the Omani context, as the higher education sector employs academics from different countries, with a broad range of cultures and personalities. Omani academics themselves like to be involved in the decision-making process, both in their institutions and at the national level. The difference between this study's finding and that of Hong et al. reinforces the importance of conducting this research in different national contexts.

The correlation results confirmed that there is a positive correlation between leadership and supervision skills and academic staff retention ($r = 0.436$); thus, when leadership and supervision skills increases, academic staff retention increases as well. Furthermore, the multiple regression analysis demonstrated that there is a strongly significant effect for leadership and supervision skills on academic staff retention. It was found that satisfaction with leadership and supervision skills increases the intention to stay by 0.19 points. These results are consistent with Ng'ethe's (2013) findings, which quantitatively and qualitatively demonstrate the impact of leadership style on academics' intention to stay or leave. His findings lend support to the argument that employees leave leaders and not organisations. The current study's findings also align with those of Bigirimana et al. (2016), who revealed that an unfavourable leadership style led to situations where academic staff would leave their universities at the earliest opportunity.

To sum up, leadership and supervision skills has a strong and direct impact on academic staff retention. This was proved by the multiple regression, correlation, descriptive analysis, and qualitative data findings.

### 2. ***Continuing Professional Development and Retention***

Continuing professional development (CPD) was measured in the survey based on opportunity for career growth, regularity, fairness, and equity. The quantitative data results revealed that the mean of the continuing professional development (3.016) is just above 3.0. Although this mean suggests satisfaction, it indicates that there is no significant difference between the number of satisfied and dissatisfied respondents regarding this incentive. This was supported by another quantitative data result which indicated that the percentage of academic staff who were satisfied with continuing professional development (39.2%) and the percentage who were dissatisfied (37.6%) are almost the same. These are significant findings as continuing professional development is essential for academic staff; so, when the percentage of dissatisfied academics is almost equal to the percentage of satisfied ones, special attention should be paid by institutions.

The findings from the interviews aligned with the quantitative results above, revealing that almost half of the interviewees were dissatisfied with the continuing professional development provided by their institutions. The majority of these were Omanis working at public HEIs. An interesting finding is that continuing professional development only represents an incentive for Omani academic staff to join and remain at public HEIs in the early stages of their careers because of their ambitions to continue their higher education. However, this effect diminishes later because of certain factors, such as the inappropriateness of the work environment for conducting research (due to the heavy workload), and the resulting difficulty in being promoted. When Omani academics join HEIs, they expect it will provide an appropriate environment for academic growth. However, they later realise that this is not the case. The impact of this change in expectations is in line with what Expectancy Theory would predict (see Section 7.3).

Other reasons for the academics' dissatisfaction with their continuing professional development include insufficient training and conference attendance opportunities. Moreover, the sense of inequity of opportunities to attend training courses and conferences compared to those available to administrative staff at the same institution was cited as another reason for dissatisfaction. On the other hand, three non-Omani academics working at both public and private HEIs believed that they were provided with the same opportunities for professional development as Omani academics, and this sense of equity represented an incentive for them to remain at their current institutions. Thus, the perception of equity represented an incentive for expatriate academics, while the perception of inequity represented a disincentive for Omani academics, which is in line with the predictions of Equity Theory (see Section 7.3).

The correlation results confirmed that there is a positive correlation between continuing professional development and academic staff retention (r = 0.463), and hence when continuing professional development increases, academic staff retention does as well. Furthermore, the multiple regression analysis proved that continuing professional development has a significant effect on academic staff retention. It was found that satisfaction with continuing professional development increases intention to stay by 0.18 points, and vice versa.

The above finding regarding the positive and significant impact of continuing professional development on academic staff retention is in line with the findings of Oyagi and Kembu (2014), who report that career development positively and significantly influences academic staff retention. It is also consistent with the findings of Ng'ethe (2013) and Hong et al. (2012), who state that there is a significant relationship between ongoing training and academic staff retention. The significant influence of opportunities for learning and growth on academic staff retention was also demonstrated by Mubarak et al. (2012) using correlation and regression analysis. Many other studies have also emphasised the relationship between continuing professional development and academic staff retention (e.g. Netswera et al., 2005; Musah and Nkuah, 2013; Onah and Anikwe, 2016).

The lack of opportunities to attend conferences and training courses due to the financial constraints not only affected academics' satisfaction with the fringe benefits provided by their institutions, but also had a critical impact on their research achievement, which in turn affected their opportunities for promotion, career development, and salary raises. This is consistent with Tettey (2006) and Metcalf et al.'s (2005) findings.

In brief, continuing professional development has a strong and direct impact on academic staff retention. This was demonstrated by the multiple regression, correlation, descriptive analysis, and qualitative data findings.

### 3. ***Autonomy and Work Environment and Retention***

The impact of staff autonomy and work environment (AWE) was measured in the survey based on perceptions of freedom, flexibility, job security, and environment. When the means of the incentives were compared, the highest rating was given to autonomy and work environment (3.537). This indicates that this was the incentive with which the respondents were most satisfied to some extent. This result aligns with the participants' responses when they were asked directly about their satisfaction with their autonomy and work environment situation. Most of the respondents reported being satisfied (64.2%), a higher percentage than were satisfied with any of the other incentives.

The findings from the interviews also confirmed that almost all Omani and non-Omani academic staff members who participated in this study mentioned autonomy and work environment as an incentive to remain at both the public and the private HEIs. They reported being satisfied with several aspects of their autonomy and work environment, such as their level of autonomy as they did not have a direct boss, the flexibility in their working hours, the nature of the work (they liked the teaching profession), the respectful working environment, the dedication and hard work of their students, and the good relationships with their colleagues. Studies have found that dissatisfaction with relations with colleagues increases the likelihood of academics' resignation (Metcalf et al., 2005).

However, there are some factors relating to autonomy and work environment with which the academic staff expressed dissatisfaction. For example, more than half of the participants were dissatisfied with the heavy teaching and administrative workload, which left them without sufficient time for conducting research. Consequently, they would not be able to attain a higher academic rank through promotion. As a result, this could constitute one of the reasons for deciding to leave an institution, as some participants mentioned. This result is consistent with Metcalf et al. (2005) and Tettey's (2006) findings, which revealed that academic staff members who feel that their workload is too great are more likely to leave their institutions. The reason is that they do not have enough time for research due to high teaching and administrative demands. This is also in line with Bigirimana et al.'s (2016) findings, which revealed that unfavourable working conditions, including heavy workloads, lead to academic staff leaving their universities at the earliest opportunity.

Furthermore, the perception of inequity always leads to dissatisfaction with autonomy and work environment as with the other factors. The academic staff reported being dissatisfied when they compared themselves with other staff either at their institutions or outside academia. Their comparisons of workload and access to activities and recreational facilities such as entertainment clubs are examples of the inequity (see the discussion of Equity Theory in Section 7.3).

The correlation analysis revealed that there is a positive relationship between autonomy and work environment and academic staff retention ($r = 0.367$), indicating that when autonomy and work environment increases, academic staff retention increases as well. The correlation analysis also revealed that autonomy and work environment had a strong inter-relationship with continuing professional development ($r = 0.597$) and leadership and supervision skills ($r = 0.609$). This is possibly because the leaders/supervisors are the people responsible for granting autonomy and providing a good working environment for their academic staff. Thus, it can be said that when continuing professional development and leadership and supervision skills are present in the multiple regression equation, autonomy and work environment is addressed indirectly.

Many studies have demonstrated the impact of autonomy and work environment on academic staff members' intention to stay or leave. Oyagi and Kembu (2014) found that the work environment has a positive and significant influence on academic staff retention. Onah and Anikwe (2016) supported this finding that an improved work environment is one of the factors that impacts academics' retention. The findings of Netswera et al. (2005) and Metcalf et al. (2005) also support the above results. However, the results of Samuel and Chipunza's (2013) study were inconsistent with these findings, as they suggest that variables like flexibility, autonomy, and workload are not in fact associated with the attrition of academics in the universities.

In summary, although autonomy and work environment were not among the factors shown to have a strong and direct impact on academic staff retention in the multiple regression analysis, autonomy and work environment was addressed indirectly through leadership and supervision skills. In addition, the importance of autonomy and work environment was emphasised through the correlation and was demonstrated through the descriptive analysis and qualitative data findings, as discussed above.

### 4. ***Infrastructure and Resources and Retention***

The importance of infrastructure and resources (IAR) was measured based on appropriateness and continuous improvement. When the means of the incentives were compared, the second highest rating was given to infrastructure and resources (3.534). This indicates that it is the second most satisfactory incentive after autonomy and work environment. This is also in line with the participants' responses to the survey question regarding their level of satisfaction with infrastructure and resources. Their responses revealed that most of the academic staff were satisfied with infrastructure and resources (63.3%), which again represented the second highest percentage of satisfaction after autonomy and work environment.

The findings from the interviews indicated that infrastructure and resources was considered an incentive by four expatriate academic staff members working at both public and private HEIs due to the availability of appropriate and continuously improved infrastructure and resources. They were satisfied with the facilities and services provided by their institutions, such as educational trips, desks, online access to scientific journals, computer labs, and technical support. However, two Omani academics working at another public institution expressed their dissatisfaction with infrastructure and resources. This is because that they were not pleased with the size of their offices or the availability of educational resources for activities such as field trips.

The correlation results revealed that there is a positive relationship between infrastructure and resources and academic staff retention ($r = 0.400$), indicating that when infrastructure and resources increases, academic staff retention increases as well. The correlation results also revealed that infrastructure and resources is strongly inter-correlated with continuing professional development ($r = 0.673$) and leadership and supervision skills ($r = 0.532$). This is possibly because the leaders/supervisors are the people responsible for providing appropriate teaching resources to their academic staff. Thus, it can be said that when continuing professional development and leadership and supervision skills are present in the multiple regression equation, infrastructure and resources is addressed indirectly.

As most of the previous studies in this area were conducted in Africa, the majority of the universities examined suffered from insufficient infrastructure and resources. The infrastructure and resource issues that caused dissatisfaction among the academics in those studies related to limited internet access, personal computers, staff offices, library holdings, laboratory equipment, clerical/secretarial assistance, telephone service, and poor maintenance of facilities. Dissatisfaction with infrastructure and resources increases the likelihood of staff leaving HEIs (Metcalf et al., 2005; Tettey, 2006; Samuel and Chipunza, 2013).

In summary, infrastructure and resources might not have as strong and direct an impact on academic staff retention as the multiple regression analysis revealed, but they are still important. Their importance was emphasised by the correlation and demonstrated by the descriptive analysis. The qualitative data findings generated by the interviews also supported these results.

### 5. ***Recognition and Appreciation and Retention***

The impact of recognition and appreciation (RAA) was measured in the survey based on the availability of various forms of recognition and appreciation that matched the academic staff members' efforts. When the means of the participants' satisfaction with the factors were compared, the descriptive analysis revealed that the mean of recognition and appreciation (3.371) was the third highest (after autonomy and work environment and infrastructure and resources), indicating that the number of academic staff who were satisfied with the recognition and appreciation at their institutions exceeded the number of those who were dissatisfied to some extent. This was supported by the results of the descriptive analysis, which revealed that 41% of respondents were satisfied with recognition and appreciation, while 35.6% were dissatisfied.

Turning to the qualitative findings, two of the academics who participated in the interviews expressed their satisfaction with the recognition and appreciation they experienced at their institutions. Whilst both were working at private HEIs, one was Omani and the other was an expatriate. They were happy that their institutions were doing their best to recognise and praise their academic staff by providing different forms of recognition and appreciation incentives, such as praising and thanking them, involving them in decision-making, awarding a prize for the best teacher or best head of department, or even providing financial rewards or promoting them, all of which are considered evidence of appreciation and recognition.

On the other hand, five academics expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of recognition and appreciation shown by their institutions. Two were Omanis and the other three were non-Omanis. These participants were working at both public and private HEIs. The reasons for their dissatisfaction were various: for example, they might be provided with a personal thank you or receive words of praise from their direct supervisors, but not from the top management; as they had put great effort into their work or had spent long years working at their current institutions, they sought such recognition from the top. Sometimes, a personal thank you from the supervisor was considered not enough; instead, they felt that there should be concrete actions to demonstrate recognition and appreciation, such as reducing teaching and administrative work or allowing them more time to undertake research.

According to four of these academic staff members, there was a lack of any form of recognition and appreciation at their institutions. This indicates that when they spend years working hard for the same institution or when they do extra work, they expect that their efforts and performance, or even their long years of experience, will be recognised and appreciated by their institutions (see the discussion of Expectancy Theory in Section 7.3). When this does not materialise, they feel dissatisfied and might wish to leave. Another reason for dissatisfaction was the perception of inequity. One example cited involved a department celebrating the graduation of some academic staff members but not others, or marking the appointment of some new academics but not others (see the discussions of Equity Theory and Expectancy Theory in Section 7.3). These are significant findings that should not be ignored because addressing these issues is not difficult; their costs are indirect and relatively low, and such improvements can be very effective in satisfying, motivating, and retaining academic staff.

The correlation results revealed that there is a positive correlation between recognition and appreciation and academic staff retention ($r = 0.390$), indicating that when recognition and appreciation increases, academic staff retention increases as well. The correlation results also revealed that recognition and appreciation is strongly inter-correlated with continuing professional development ($r = 0.597$) and leadership and supervision skills ($r = 0.684$). This might be because the leaders/supervisors are the people responsible for recognising and appreciating the efforts of academic staff members. Thus, it can be said that when continuing professional development and leadership and supervision skills are present in the multiple regression equation, recognition and appreciation is addressed indirectly.

Few studies have discussed the relationship between recognition and academic staff retention. Oyagi and Kembu (2014) found that there is a positive and significant influence of recognition on academic staff retention. Similarly, another study carried out by Musah and Nkuah (2013) discovered that there is a positive relationship between recognition and retention of academics. The study found that high remuneration and recognition of performance were key factors that could influence staff to stay at their institutions.

To sum up, recognition and appreciation might not have as strong and direct an impact on academic staff retention as the multiple regression analysis revealed, but recognition and appreciation was still important. Its importance was demonstrated by the correlation and the descriptive analysis and the qualitative data findings.

Three non-financial incentives emerged from the qualitative data findings. These findings are significant because they have not been discussed (or have been discussed very little) in previous literature, and because they are different from the incentives covered in the original questionnaire. These factors emerged during the interview process and open up new paths that should be of interest for management and future studies.

### *6. Prestige and Retention*

The first non-financial incentive to emerge from the interviews is prestige (PRE). The interviews revealed that a minority of academic staff members wished to join and remain at highly reputable institutions as this provides them with prestige in the society. It is an incentive for both Omani and non-Omani academics, but particularly for Omanis, and especially those working for highly reputable public HEIs. All four of the academic staff members who mentioned prestige either as an incentive to stay at their institutions or as a factor for leaving their current institutions to join prestigious institutions were working at public HEIs.

Prestige can constitute a reason for Omani academics to move from less reputable institutions to highly reputable ones. They believed that the latter would provide opportunities to participate in conferences and external committees. This might be true as some prestigious institutions still provide their staff with these opportunities despite the financial crisis, while other institutions stopped financing participation in conferences. In this regard, too, there is a perception of inequity felt by those who work for less prestigious institutions, which might lead them to leave (see the discussion of Equity Theory in Section 7.3). Prestige does not only relate to the prestige of the institutions, but could also involve holding prestigious leadership positions, such as deanships and assistant deanships. Some Omani academic staff members, as one of the interviewees indicated, find it difficult to go back to teaching and losing the prestige of that position and all of its accompanying perks, and hence would rather leave the institution.

No literature has been found that discusses prestige as a factor affecting the retention of academic staff members in particular.

### 7. ***Stability and Retention***

The second incentive to emerge from the interviews is stability (STA). Stability can constitute an incentive for a minority of Omani and non-Omani academics to remain at both public and private HEIs as it takes time to adapt to an institution's system, work environment, and colleagues. Geographic location is another stability factor, as some Omani academics preferred to work at institutions located in their hometowns so they can live with their families. This provides them with social stability. In addition, age also influences stability; as academics get older, they look for stability and hence are more likely to remain at their institutions. The influence of age on academic staff retention was also demonstrated by the multiple regression analysis, with the results indicating a positive and significant relationship between age and retention, especially when the age of the academic staff members exceeds 40; it becomes stronger at the age of 55 and above.

On the other hand, feeling unstable could lead academics to leave their institutions. According to one Omani academic staff member, moving Omani academic staff from institutions located in their hometowns to other branches located in other cities might cause them to resign. Moreover, for some academics, the capital city was viewed as more attractive than small cities as it offered a better lifestyle for their families; this constitutes another example of how geographic location represented a factor in staff retention. Also, the complicated procedures associated with obtaining visas for expatriate academics' children who are over 21 years of age constitute another source of social instability which can lead female expatriates, in particular, to consider leaving their institutions, especially those who have unmarried daughters. One of the participants did not have any relatives or a place in which to live outside of Oman, which made it difficult for her grown-up daughter to move to another country, even to her home country. However, this does not seem to be a strong motivating factor for expatriates to leave an institution, and they look for alternative ways for their children to stay with them.

Netswera et al.'s (2005) investigation was the only study found that discusses the relationship between stability and the retention of academic staff, indicating that social instability is among the factors that leads academic staff to leave their home countries and emigrate to the countries in which their spouses work. Thus, the findings of this study are not consistent with those of Netswera et al. as Omani academics did not in fact indicate that they might leave Oman and emigrate for reasons of social stability.

### 8. ***Oman and Omanis and Retention***

The final incentive that emerged from the interviews is Oman and the Omanis (OMN). The data analysis revealed that this represented an incentive for all of the expatriate participants to work and remain at institutions located in Oman. The four main reasons cited for this are: 1) Oman is a peaceful country; 2) it offers a good quality of life and various facilities; 3) there is respect for all people regardless of their gender, nationality or religion; and 4) Omanis are kind and moral people. Thus, all of the expatriates interviewed stated that they wished to work at their institutions for as long as possible, adding that if they had to leave their institutions, they would look for another institution inside Oman. Although no one expressed dissatisfaction with this factor, presumably, if the situation were different, the academics would be more likely to leave. This inference is supported by the fact that some academic staff members had left jobs at institutions outside of Oman because of the absence of one or more of the above desirable factors.

Unlike the findings of Netswera et al. (2005), which revealed that the African staff at South African universities might leave their institutions and emigrate to other countries for social, political, or economic factors, the findings of this study revealed the reverse, that all expatriate academic staff members would like to stay in Oman for as long as possible for the aforementioned reasons.

**Research Question 2: What are the factors leading to academic staff members' resignations at higher education institutions in Oman?**

The above discussion has revealed that the same factors that could affect academic staff retention can also lead them to leave the sector if those factors are not present. Academic staff members were asked in the survey to rank the importance of certain factors in their decisions to remain at or leave their current institutions. Most of the factors were rated as 'very important' in their decisions (above 50%). Working conditions (including autonomy and work environment and infrastructure and resources) was the most highly rated factor (63.1%), followed by recognition and appreciation (58%), salary (56.5%), promotion (53.6%), and continuous professional development (52.7%). Meanwhile, leadership and supervision skills (44.8%) and fringe benefits (36.6%) were less frequently rated as 'very important' factors, but were more often rated as 'important'.

Autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, and recognition and appreciation were the factors with which the respondents were most satisfied and, hence, increased their intention to stay at their institutions, as the quantitative data results revealed. Similarly, these factors were also rated as the most important factors that would affect their intentions to leave. The same is true with salary and continuing professional development, which were frequently rated as very important factors in the academic staff members' decisions to leave.

As was mentioned above, many participants expressed their dissatisfaction with promotion, with more than half indicating that failure to be promoted was one of the main reasons for leaving their institutions. This result is in line with the ratings, which marked this factor out as being very important in the academics' decisions to leave their institutions. However, although most of the academic staff were dissatisfied with fringe benefits, stating that it does not increase the desire to stay at an institution, this factor was less frequently rated as being 'very important' compared to the other factors. This means that even if the academics were dissatisfied with the fringe benefits at their institutions and felt it did not increase their intention to remain working there, it played a less prominent role in their decisions to leave than the other factors. In short, the factors leading to staff members' resignation are more likely to be the same factors as those that encourage their retention.

The quantitative data findings supported the above conclusion as it was clear that the lack or absence of those incentives might lead to academic staff members' resignations. In addition, three factors emerged from the qualitative data analysis: prestige, stability, and Oman and Omanis. In the interviews, participants were asked about the factors that might lead to their leaving their present institutions. It was found that the incentives impacting academic staff retention were the same factors that might lead to their resignation should they be lacking or absent.

In particular, while some participants were satisfied with a particular incentive provided by their institutions, others felt dissatisfied and indicated that the lack of that incentive might lead them to consider leaving the institution. For instance, most of the expatriate academics identified fringe benefits as an incentive to remain in their current positions, while most of the Omani participants were dissatisfied with their fringe benefits and indicated that if they found a job with better benefits, they might move. This might explain why fringe benefits were rated as less important in the participants' decisions to leave, as it is possible that the expatriate academics, who made up 57% of the respondents in this study, assigned less importance to fringe benefits.

**Research Question 3: Which incentive type (financial or non-financial) has a greater effect on retention?**

According to the discussion above, the multiple regression analysis revealed that salaries, leadership and supervision skills, and continuing professional development significantly influence retention. These represent a variety of incentives, as salary is financial whereas leadership and supervision skills and continuing professional development are non-financial. Also, as can be seen from the descriptive analysis discussed earlier, all financial and non-financial incentives included in the survey are important and affect academic staff retention. The financial incentives were salary, fringe benefits, and promotion, while the non-financial incentives were leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, and recognition and appreciation. Thus, the quantitative findings appear to show that there was no preference for one type of incentive (financial or non-financial) over the other. Therefore, a combination of both types is likely to be most effective for retaining staff.

The qualitative data findings supported the quantitative data results. In the interviews, academic staff members were asked clearly and directly about which incentive type – financial or non-financial – they considered more important for their retention. The majority stated that both financial and non-financial incentives are important and that a combination of both should be provided by institutions to retain their staff. If academics receive only one type of incentive, its effect will wear off after some time. Therefore, a diversification of financial and non-financial incentives is important.

**Research Question 4: How do characteristics such as institution type (public or private) and nationality (Omani or non-Omani) impact retention?**

Overall, when background factors are fitted into the separate regression models, they appear to be significant. Staff working at private HEIs are more likely to leave; but this explains only 1% of the variation in staff retention. Also, nationality has a strongly significant statistical effect on retention, explaining 4% of the total variation in retention. However, when the full model is specified, background factors cease to be significant, suggesting that contextual factors like institution type, nationality, and academic field are themselves correlated with salaries and, possibly, age, which means that when these variables are included, contextual factors cease to be statistically significant.

The qualitative data analysis indicates that institution type had no effect on the findings. This means the factors affecting retention were the same for academic staff working at public and private HEIs. The only factor that might be affected by institution type was prestige; all the participants who mentioned prestige were working at public HEIs. The other characteristic under investigation is nationality (Omani and non-Omani). Whilst the impact on retention of some of the incentives provided by the institutions was not affected by nationality, the impact of others was. Factors like promotion, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, recognition and appreciation, prestige, and stability were not affected by nationality, while salary, fringe benefits, leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, and Oman and Omanis were affected. For example, Omani academics were dissatisfied with the current salaries provided by their institutions, while some expatriate academic staff were satisfied and some were not.

Also, the fringe benefits on offer were important factors in the retention of expatriate academics, while this was not the case for Omani academics. Whilst expatriate academic staff members were satisfied with the leadership and supervision skills, some Omanis were satisfied with some aspects of leadership and supervision skills, but most of them were dissatisfied with other aspects. Similarly, the expatriate participants were satisfied with their continuing professional development, whereas this represents an incentive for Omanis only in their early careers when they aspire to continue their higher education, but it diminishes with time because of the scarcity of training courses and financed conference participation. Likewise, Oman and Omanis constituted a significant incentive to retain expatriate academics, but this factor was not mentioned by Omani academics.

## 7.5 Summary

The key findings of the study have revealed that both financial and non-financial incentives impact academic staff retention. The financial incentives that have been found to have the most impact on academic staff retention are salaries, fringe benefits, and promotion. On the other hand, the non-financial incentives that impact retention are leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, recognition and appreciation, prestige, stability, and Oman and Omanis. These last three incentives emerged from the qualitative data and were not among the factors considered in the quantitative data collection. Furthermore, the lack or absence of these incentives might lead to academic staff members' resignation. Also, the findings of the study revealed that a combination of both types of incentives (financial and non-financial) is likely to be most effective for retaining staff. In addition, the institution type (public/private) was found not to have a significant influence on the findings, while nationality (Omani/non-Omani) can influence the results.

# Chapter 8: Conclusions

## 8.1 Introduction

Having reached the end of this study, it is important to recap and provide recommendations and directions for further research. This chapter will first provide a summary of the study and its key findings. Then, it will highlight the contributions and recommendations. Finally, the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

## 8.2 Summary of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the impact of financial and non-financial incentives on the retention of academic staff working at higher education institutions. The study also sought to explore the factors that can lead to academic staff resignation and whether they are similar to or different from the incentives that influence retention. Another important objective was to explore which incentive type (financial or non-financial) has a greater effect on retaining academic staff members. Moreover, the study sought to investigate whether there is a difference between the incentives that impact the retention of academic staff members working at public HEIs and those that impact the retention of academic staff members working at private HEIs. Also, the study examined whether there is any difference between the incentives that influence the retention of Omani and non-Omani academic staff members. The impacts of other characteristics (such as age, gender, qualifications, field, leadership position, and teaching load) on the retention of academic staff members were also examined.

The data used in the study was gathered from HEIs in the Sultanate of Oman. As the researcher works in Oman, she is familiar with its higher education system and other relevant issues that can affect retention. This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, whereby quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather the data. A survey was used to gather information from the largest possible sample of academic staff members. A total of 317 responses from 27 Omani public and private HEIs were considered. Subsequently, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted to enrich the study with a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives regarding the incentives that impact their desires and decisions to remain at or leave their current institutions. The interview participants were selected based on their survey responses. Academic staff members who were willing to participate in interviews provided their names and contact details at the end of the survey. Ultimately, 16 interviews were conducted with academic staff: eight from public HEIs and eight from private HEIs

## 8.3 Summary of the Key Findings

To analyse the data, several tests were used, including descriptive analysis, correlation, regression, and thematic analysis. After analysing the data, several findings were revealed. These will be summarised in this section with reference to each of the research questions.

**Research Question 1: What are the financial and non-financial incentives that impact academic staff retention at higher education institutions in Oman?**

The three incentives that were found from the regression analysis to have a positive and significant impact on the retention of academic staff are salaries, leadership and supervision skills, and continuing professional development. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the other types of financial and non-financial incentives have no impact on retention since some of the other incentives are closely related to the aforementioned incentives, such as promotion, autonomy and work environment, and infrastructure and resources. At all public HEIs and most private ones, a salary increase is associated with a promotion. Moreover, in order to be promoted, academic staff members need access to resources and time in which to conduct research, as well as opportunities to publish work and participate in conferences.

From the above and in conjunction with the findings of the other methods of analysis used in this study, it can be seen that several types of financial and non-financial incentives can impact the retention of academic staff at Omani HEIs. The financial incentives that were found to affect academic staff retention are salaries, fringe benefits, and promotion. On the other hand, the non-financial incentives that impact retention are leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, recognition and appreciation, prestige, stability, and Oman and Omanis. These last three incentives emerged from the qualitative data and were not among the incentives presented in the quantitative findings. However, prestige and stability were only indicated by a few participants.

**<u>Research Question 2:</u> What are the factors leading to academic staff members' resignations at higher education institutions in Oman?**

The study revealed that the lack or absence of the aforementioned incentives might lead to academic staff members' resignations. Thus, it was found that the same incentives that can motivate academic staff to remain at their current institutions are the same factors whose lack or absence might lead to resignations. As was mentioned above, the three factors that were shown by multiple regression to affect the retention or resignation of the academic staff members are salary, leadership and supervision skills, and continuing professional development. Also, the respondents indicated that autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, salary, promotion, and continuing professional development would be the most important factors if they decided to leave their current institutions. The study also found that the factors with which the participants were dissatisfied in their current situations are promotion and fringe benefits (according to the descriptive and thematic analyses), in addition to workload (as part of autonomy and work environment) and lack of funding to attend international conferences and training courses (as part of continuing professional development).

**<u>Research Question 3:</u> What incentive type (financial or non-financial) has a greater effect on retention?**

The findings revealed that a combination of both types of incentives (financial and non-financial) is likely to be effective for retaining academic staff. Onah and Anikwe (2016) state that retention is a complex concept and there is no single recipe for keeping staff members. Hence, there needs to be a smart strategy for retention in place that consists of a variety of incentives. In addition, Hong et al. (2012) indicate that staff from different cultures might have different expectations that determine their satisfaction and retention. As the higher education sector comprises staff from different cultures, there should be diversification when establishing retention strategies to consider these differences.

**<u>Research Question 4:</u> How do characteristics such as institution type (public or private) and nationality (Omani or non-Omani) impact retention?**

The HEI type (public/private) was found to have a slight effect on the retention of academic staff, as the participants are more likely to leave private institutions by 0.19 points. However, this represents only 1% of the variation in retention. Also, none of the factors affecting academic staff retention or resignation were affected by institution type, with the exception of prestige (all the participants who mentioned prestige as a factor were from public HEIs). However, recalling the findings discussed in reference to Research Question 1, prestige was mentioned in the interviews by only a few participants.

The second characteristic considered was the nationality of the academic staff (Omani/non-Omani). The findings revealed that this has a strong significant effect on retention, with non-Omani staff more likely to remain at their institutions by 0.4 points. However, although nationality can explain only 4% of the total variation in retention, this is still higher than the influence of HEI type. Also, factors like promotion, autonomy and work environment, infrastructure and resources, recognition and appreciation, prestige, and stability were not affected by nationality. This means the impact of these factors on retention or resignation were the same for Omani and non-Omani academic staff.

On the other hand, salary, fringe benefits, leadership and supervision skills, continuing professional development, and Oman and Omanis are the factors that were affected. The findings indicated that most of the academic staff who expressed their dissatisfaction with these factors (salary, fringe benefits, leadership and supervision skills, and continuing professional development) were Omani nationals. It should be noted that, overall, Oman and the Omani people was indicated as a factor mainly by the expatriate academic staff and was identified as one of the most important incentives for them staying longer at their current institutions. Also, it was found that if they did in fact decide to leave their institutions, they would look for job opportunities at other institutions in Oman.

The impacts of other characteristics (such as age, gender, qualifications, field, leadership position, and teaching load) on the retention of the academic staff members were also examined. It was found that the academic staff tended to remain at their current institutions as they grew older (above 40). However, this finding might be more applicable to the expatriates as the study revealed that Omani academics may leave their institutions after the age of 40, especially when they had completed 20 years of service, which allowed them to draw a pension in addition to a salary at a new institution. The study also revealed that academic staff members who worked in medical specialities were more likely to stay at their institutions, although this represents a small percentage (2.4%) of the variation in retention. The other characteristics – gender, qualifications, leadership position, and teaching load – were not found to have a significant effect on retention. However, the fact that the majority of the interview participants expressed their dissatisfaction with their heavy workloads should not be ignored. A consequence they reported of their heavy workloads (including teaching and administration work) was that the academics had difficulty finding enough time to conduct research, which in turn negatively affected their professional growth, promotion prospects, and salaries, all of which were identified as key factors affecting retention.

## 8.4 Contribution of the Study

This study makes several contributions to existing knowledge, as will be outlined in this section with reference to the research gaps identified when reviewing the literature.

1. Previous studies on staff retention in HEIs have explored the factors affecting academic staff retention in general or have been based on motivation type (intrinsic or extrinsic). No studies were found that classify the factors in terms of financial and non-financial incentives in order to consider which type has the greater impact on the retention of academic staff. Also, all previous studies that have investigated the impact of financial or non-financial incentives in the HE sector and other sectors have concentrated on the impact of incentives on job satisfaction, employee motivation, or employee or organisation performance, whereas this study looks at these incentives in relation to staff retention.

   One of the main contributions of this study is that it seeks to understand the exact needs and concerns of the participating academic staff members in order to investigate whether these needs and concerns are more related to financial or non-financial incentives (see the discussion of Research Questions 1, 2 and 3 in the previous section). Moreover, this study helps to provide an understanding of the needs of staff not only in the HE sector but in other sectors as well.

2. It has been noticed that previous studies relating to academic staff retention at higher education institutions have not focused on comparisons between public and private HEIs. Instead, they have concentrated mainly on either public or private institutions.

   This study enriches the literature by providing an investigation of whether the institution type (public or private) has an influence on the retention of academic staff, making comparisons to examine whether the factors affecting the retention/resignation of academic staff members are the same or different at public and private HEIs (see the discussion of Research Question 4 in the previous section).

3. No studies were encountered that deal exclusively with academic staff retention at HEIs in Oman, in particular, or in the Middle East, in general.

   Thus, this study aims to add a new perspective to those offered by previous studies as it is carried out in a high-income non-Western context in a Middle Eastern Arab Gulf state. Middle Eastern states with similar circumstances and cultures might benefit from the findings of this study across the entire education sector (not only the higher education sector, but also the school sector).

4. This study has shed light on the role of Oman and the Omani people in the retention of expatriate academic staff. The importance of this non-financial incentive emerged from the qualitative data analysis specifically, and it might be similar in principle to a finding of Netswera et al. (2005), who cite the external environment as a notable non-internal factor (i.e., a factor that is not related to the institution itself). The findings of Netswera et al. reveal that the local staff at the South African higher education institutions at which the retention issue was studied intended to leave their institutions and emigrate from their home country because of external environment factors, such as social, political, or economic factors. The present study revealed something different, which is that almost all of the expatriate academic staff members who participated in the interviews wished to stay at their current institutions for as long as possible because they preferred to stay in Oman and had no intention of returning home in the near future.

   The reasons why the expatriate academics preferred to stay in Oman can be summarised in four points regarding Oman: the safety and peace that exist in Oman; Oman’s environment and nature and the availability of different facilities; Oman’s accommodation and respect for people of different faiths; and the Omani people themselves, who are, according to the expatriate academics, 'very friendly, very helpful, humble, so positive, full of energy, and so respectful'. Thus, while Netswera et al. found that the South African staff of their study intended to leave their current institutions to emigrate to other countries for reasons related to the country itself, the present study found that non-Omani academic staff intend to stay for as long as possible at their current institutions for reasons related to Oman and the Omani people. Therefore, the relevance of this non-internal incentive highlighted in Netswera et al. is confirmed by this inverse finding, i.e. that non-Omanis wish to stay in Oman because of their positive experience of the same factors of which South African academics reported having negative experiences. This finding might also contribute to understanding expatriates' attitudes to staying in other sectors in Oman besides the HE sector.

5. Stability was also cited in Netswera et al. (2005) among the external environmental factors that led academic staff members to migrate abroad to countries where their spouses were working. While the current study revealed that social stability was one of the factors that might lead a few of the expatriate female academic staff with unmarried daughters aged 21 and above to leave the country because of visa issues (see pages 145-146), this case might only be applicable to the few expatriate women who had unmarried daughters of that age, and who were trying to find solutions for their daughters so that they could stay in Oman for as long as possible. This differs from the findings of Netswera et al., who revealed that academic staff might leave their country in search of social stability; in this study, it is the expatriate academic staff who might leave their home countries for Oman for the sake of social stability.

   It should be also mentioned that the stability referred to in this study is not only an external environmental factor, it is also an internal factor as academic staff tended to stay at their institutions when they had become used to their systems, the work environments, and their colleagues. Also, the current study revealed that some Omani academic staff members preferred to work at institutions located in their hometowns, where their families live; if they were moved to another city and felt socially unstable, they would look for a job at another institution in their hometown. Thus, academic staff might move from one city to another within the same country, which is different from the findings of other studies on academic staff retention.

6. The prestige provided by reputable institutions to their academic staff might have represented an incentive for staff to remain, or even cause some of the Omani

academics to reject job offers from other institutions if the difference in salary were moderate. Academic staff working for other institutions might also prefer to move to reputable institutions for the same reason. As the impact of an institution's prestige on academic staff retention was not found in the existing literature, this finding constitutes another contribution to the existing knowledge.

## 8.5 Recommendations

This section will provide a set of recommendations for polices that can help higher education institutions satisfy their academic staff, thereby promoting their retention. These recommendations are based on the findings of the study and consider the needs of the academic staff. The suggestions are not only directed at the management of institutions, but also at Omani decision-makers. At public HEIs in Oman, when it comes to decisions and policies on financial matters, like salary increases, promotion, or even rewards and bonuses, it is not only the institutions that take the decisions, but also other authorities in the country.

- Smart strategies need to be devised that include a variety of both financial and non-financial incentives. It is vital that HEIs have their own strategies for retention that combine several types of financial and non-financial incentives. Moreover, it is important to understand that after receiving the same type of incentive for an extended period of time, academic staff members tend to become saturated by that particular type, as indeed the participants indicated in the interviews.

  Another thing one needs to be aware of is that individuals differ in their needs and the higher education sector comprises staff members from different countries and cultures, each of which might have different expectations. Consequently, what satisfies one particular academic staff member might not satisfy another. According to Hong et al. (2012), staff members from different cultures might have different expectations that determine their satisfaction and retention. Therefore, it is recommended that retention strategies be diversified to consider these differences; as Onah and Anikwe (2016) observe, retention is a complex concept and there is no single recipe for keeping staff. The institutions' management teams can develop surveys (if they are not already doing so) in which they ask their staff about their needs and concerns. This can help the institutions better understand what their academic staff members require and how they feel in order to be able to create a strategy based on their opinions and suggestions. This strategy should be reassessed from time to time (maybe on an annual basis) to check its effectiveness and make the necessary amendments.

- Promotion is a very significant incentive as it is associated with two key considerations: academic rank and salary increases. It should therefore be granted on time and not be suspended. Money spent to promote academic staff can be considered an investment in higher education because human resources are always the most important asset for all organisations, and HEIs are the repository of a country's science and knowledge. Also, it is recommended that the promotion criteria be reviewed so as not to overemphasise research, especially as teaching and administrative work takes up most of academic staff members' time. Another option would be to reduce the teaching load by counting administrative tasks and research in the overall workload. For example, if academic staff members have a workload of 12 credit hours, the administrative tasks and research should be counted within these 12 hours.

  In addition, greater attention should be given to research at HEIs as these institutions' responsibility is not just to teach students, but also to conduct research that will be of benefit to the country and the world. Given that fact that research plays a key role in securing promotion at HEIs as well as in professional growth, the academic staff members who participated in this study were very concerned about this issue as they felt they did not have enough time in which to carry it out. Institutions might need to recruit more academic staff among whom to distribute the teaching hours. Alternatively, they could reduce the teaching hours for courses, so that instead of students being taught four hours for three credit hours, they can be taught for only three hours.

- Fringe benefits such as rewards and bonuses should be reconsidered, especially since they currently fall below the expectations of academic staff members. Participants mentioned that even if they worked from morning to night, they would receive no commensurate bonuses or rewards. Also, in the cases of the institutions that had ceased financing participation at international conferences due to the economic effects of the oil crisis, this might negatively impact the professional development of the academic staff who no longer have the opportunity to meet their counterparts from other universities and, therefore, cannot benefit from their experiences and research.

Considering the financial concerns, while it may be inevitable that each academic staff member is given the opportunity to attend fewer conferences, they should not be prevented from attending any at all. Also, academic staff members' needs for training courses and workshops should be considered as a lack of professional development may negatively affect teaching skills, with academics becoming out of touch with the evolution of teaching methods. Again, due to the financial crisis, while such provisions might need to be reduced, they should not be stopped entirely. An alternative to attending training courses might be to provide in-job training by bringing in a specialist to train academic staff on a particular issue.

- It is recommended that each institution creates an early career development programme for training newly appointed or recently graduated academic staff members before they begin teaching students. It is necessary that this programme be made available to all these academics without exemption.

  This programme should familiarise the academics with the institution's objectives and their specific roles in achieving those objectives. The institution's expectations of the academics regarding teaching, research, and community service should be made clear. Teaching skills and student evaluation/assessment should be discussed before new employees commence teaching. In terms of research, it is important to explain the ranking of the journals in which papers are expected to be published, train employees on writing good papers, and urge experienced academic staff members to collaborate with the new members to publish papers together in order to help them gain the skills required to write and publish quality papers. The various community service activities, promotion criteria, and career progression opportunities should be clarified as part of this programme.

  It is important to review/track each academic staff member's progression and provide them with feedback to help them develop; this feedback should be given at least at the end of the first year in order to ensure that they are on the right track. It is not necessary for programmes to be as long-term as they tend to be in European universities, such as the University of Glasgow and Nottingham Trent University; short-term programmes should be sufficient in Omani HEIs, especially when time or costs present issues. As mentioned earlier, each institution can create its own early career development programme to make it suitable for the institution and serve its specific objectives.

- It was found that the academic staff like transparency, clarity, fairness, and equity to be present in the provision of any type of incentives. Therefore, it is important that these concepts are practised at all times at HEIs. The importance of equity is emphasised here because, sometimes, it is not the deficiency of incentives that dissatisfies academic staff members and leads to their resignations, but a sense of inequity. This was apparent in the findings of the current study. Therefore, it is recommended that incentives are reassessed to ensure that all academic staff members are granted the same incentives. For example, since private school fees are paid for expatriate academics' children, it is important that Omani academics' children be granted the same amount of assistance to attend private schools. This should be the case regardless of whether they are offered free education at public schools as it can be seen that the preference of some people in Oman is to educate their children at private schools, and academics are no exception.

  Summer travel costs can also be covered or subsidised for Omani academics and their families so that they can collaborate on research with universities abroad. By doing so, the institutions would be investing in developing new knowledge and Omani academics would be gaining the opportunity to conduct research, which is one of their greatest concerns; at the same time, the Omani academics would feel a sense of equity as they would be provided with tickets (in full or in part) just like the expatriate academics who receive annual tickets for their families to travel to their home countries. Equity in salary should also be considered: the salaries of Omani and non-Omani academics holding the same qualifications should be on a par with one another.

- More emphasis should also be placed on non-financial incentives, such as communication between management and academic staff, especially regarding communication from the top management. Another important consideration is the involvement of academic staff in decision-making processes. Recognition and appreciation represent a very important incentive that should not be ignored. Ideally, it should come from the direct manager as well as from the top management. Academic staff always need to feel that their efforts are recognised and appreciated. By taking these simple steps, management can make academic staff feel that they are important to their institutions. These incentives do not cost the institutions huge amounts of money, but they can have a deep and lasting effect on the satisfaction and retention of their academic staff. It should be noted that incentives need not always be costly, and institutions and policy-makers need to be creative in this regard. They can be small, continuous, and diverse incentives that change from time to time.

## 8.6 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study has yielded important results and achieved its objectives. However, certain limitations may have affected the study, and these will be enumerated below, not only to acknowledge the shortcomings of this research, but also to provide ideas for further studies.

- The initial objective of this study was to look at two case studies in depth: one public and one private institution. However, due to a lack of participant responses, the survey was redistributed on a larger scale to capture a larger number of responses. Further studies could focus on in-depth comparisons between two institutions (one public and one private) as case studies.

- The sample used in this study is not representative and hence the findings cannot be generalised. However, for the purpose of this study, the sample was sufficient to give a significant indication. Future studies might include a larger number of institutions and academic staff to make their findings more generalisable.

- The interviews were conducted with academic staff working at institutions located in only two regions. This was because too few participants in other regions volunteered to be interviewed and due to the distance and time involved in travelling between their locations and where the researcher lives (the researcher was able to visit other regions where a greater number of interviewees could be met). However, the interviews covered the two regions where the 16 participants work, which was helpful in that it allowed the study to obtain useful findings on the impact of that particular geographical area on the retention of academic staff. Future studies could cover more than two regions to further investigate the impact of different geographical areas on academic staff retention.

- The researcher could not collect responses from academic staff members who had resigned from the institutions covered in this study. This would have been helpful in order to understand their perspectives and investigate the reasons behind their resignations and then compare them with those mentioned by the other participants as factors that might lead to their resigning from their current institutions. Therefore, it would benefit future research to include academic staff members who have resigned from their institutions to investigate their reasons for leaving. Although there are indeed a few studies that have conducted exit questionnaires to ask about people's real reasons for leaving, those studies have been conducted either in Western or African countries; therefore, it would be insightful to explore these perspectives in an Omani or broader Arab context.

- Due to time constraints, this study adopted a cross-sectional approach. Indeed, it has been noticed that the use of a longitudinal approach to investigate the retention issue in the HE sector is rare; only one study using this approach has been found (Pienaar and Bester, 2008) and its sample comprised academic staff in the early phases of their career. Thus, it is suggested that further studies use a longitudinal approach by examining the same sample in a second round after a number of years to investigate how the participants' attitudes have changed or remained the same over time.

- Another suggestion for future studies is to look into retention from the perspective of management. This might involve including human resource managers or their representatives to compare their perspectives with those of academic staff members in order to explore whether the institutions' management staff are aware of their academic staff's needs, concerns and, more specifically, the factors that can influence them to remain at or leave their institutions.

- This study provides a basis for future studies in the Middle East, and especially in the Gulf region, not just in relation to the issue of retaining academic staff, but also regarding job satisfaction, motivation, and other human resource practices related to academic staff.

- This study can also assist researchers exploring the aforementioned areas, not only in the higher education sector, but also in the school sector, as well as other sectors.

## 8.7 Summary

Financial and non-financial incentives both play important roles in the retention of academic staff. As Onah and Anikwe (2016) note, there is no single recipe for staff retention. Therefore, a combination of both types of incentives is beneficial. The study concludes that better communication with academic staff to explore their expectations and perceptions and to develop an effective retention strategy could save higher education institutions time and effort resulting from the loss of qualified academic staff and the need to replace them with new personnel. Practising equity between Omani and non-Omani academics when providing incentives might be more important than the incentives themselves. As has been explained throughout this chapter, the findings of this study can provide benefits in many ways, whether through the recommendations for policies or the directions for further studies.

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# Appendices

# Appendix A: Academic Staff Retention Questionnaire

My name is **Amal Saif Al-Qarshoubi**, a PhD student at the University of Glasgow. My research is on:

**Academic Staff Retention at Higher Education Institutions in the Sultanate of Oman: The Impact of Incentives**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of incentives on academic staff retention at higher education institutions in Oman. You have been chosen to take part in this research because you are a member of academic staff in a higher education institution. In order for me to understand staff perspectives and to gain deeper understanding on the topic of the research, you are kindly asked to complete this questionnaire. It will take about 30 minutes. The data collected will be used for research and publication purposes only. If you have any query, do not hesitate to contact me or to contact my supervisor at the following email addresses:

Amal Al-Qarshoubi

Email: a.al-qarshoubi.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Research supervisor: Dr Kristinn Hermannsson at Kristinn.hermannsson@glasgow.ac.uk

**<u>Section One: Demographic information:</u>**

Instructions: Please provide a response for each of the following questions *<u>by ticking</u>* the appropriate answer:

1. Nationality
   - ☐ Omani
   - ☐ Non-Omani

2. Gender
   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Female

3. Age
   - ☐ Under 25
   - ☐ 25 – 29
   - ☐ 30 – 34
   - ☐ 35 – 39
   - ☐ 40 – 44
   - ☐ 45 – 49
   - ☐ 50 – 54
   - ☐ 55 and over

4. The highest level of education you have completed
   - ☐ Diploma
   - ☐ Bachelor's degree
   - ☐ Master's degree
   - ☐ PhD
   - ☐ Other, specify please ____________

5. Current place of work:
   - ☐ ***Public*** higher education institution
   - ☐ ***Private*** higher education institution

6. Contract types:
   - ☐ Permanent
   - ☐ Temporary
     - ☐ Full-time
     - ☐ Part-time
     - ☐ Other, specify please ____________

7. Total job experience
   - ☐ Less than a year
   - ☐ 1 – 4 years
   - ☐ 5 – 10 years
   - ☐ 11 – 15 years
   - ☐ More than 15 years

8. Total teaching experience in your ***current*** institution
   - ☐ Less than a year
   - ☐ 1 – 4 years
   - ☐ 5 – 10 years
   - ☐ 11 – 15 years
   - ☐ More than 15 years

9. Academic ranking:
   - ☐ Demonstrator
   - ☐ Instructor
   - ☐ Senior instructor
   - ☐ Lecturer
   - ☐ Assistant professor
   - ☐ Associate professor
   - ☐ Professor
   - ☐ Other, specify please ______________

10. Do you currently hold any leadership position?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

11. If your answer is ***Yes*** to the previous question, specify the current position:
    - ☐ Head of department
    - ☐ Assistant dean
    - ☐ Dean
    - ☐ Other, specify please ______________

12. Kindly write the educational institution you belong to:

    ____________________________

13. Kindly provide the college or department you are currently teaching in:

    ____________________________

14. How many hours per week you teach in a normal semester?

    ____________________________

15. How long are you planning to work in this institution? ___________ years

**Section Two: Financial Incentives:**

Instructions: For each statement below, please tick the category that best describes your opinion about the financial incentives you receive from your current institution:

### A. *Salary*

| ***Salary*** | | ***1*** | ***2*** | ***3*** | ***4*** | ***5*** | ***6*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***s/ n*** | ***Statement*** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Disagree*** | ***Neither Agree nor Disagree*** | ***Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** | ***Not Applicable*** |
| 1 | The salary I earn is adequate to meet my desired needs and aspirations. | | | | | | |
| 2 | This institution provides an overtime payment for extra working hours. | | | | | | |
| 3 | The institution offers attractive allowances (e.g. housing, electricity, water, transportation, telephone) to academic staff. | | | | | | |
| 4 | Salary raises are regular in this institution. | | | | | | |
| 5 | I am satisfied with the amount of salary I earn compared to employees in other organisations with similar qualifications. | | | | | | |
| 6 | I am satisfied with the amount of salary I earn compared to other academic staff in this institution with similar qualifications. | | | | | | |
| 7 | Salary raises are rare in this institution. | | | | | | |
| 8 | The salary given by this institution increases academic staff retention. | | | | | | |

### B. *Fringe Benefits*

| ***Fringe Benefits*** | | ***1*** | ***2*** | ***3*** | ***4*** | ***5*** | ***6*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***s/ n*** | ***Statement*** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Disagree*** | ***Neither Agree nor Disagree*** | ***Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** | ***Not Applicable*** |
| 9 | The institution provides rewards for skilled academic staff that match their performance. | | | | | | |
| 10 | The institution provides bonuses for academic staff according to their position and consistent with their level of performance. | | | | | | |
| 11 | The institution offers suitable health services/health insurance for academic staff. | | | | | | |
| 12 | Health services/insurance granted by the institution cover all members of the academic staff's family. | | | | | | |
| 13 | Financial support is regularly given by the | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | institution to attend conferences and/or workshops. | | | | | | |
| 14 | Financed scholarships are offered by the institution to its academic staff to continue their higher education. | | | | | | |
| 15 | I am satisfied with the amount of rewards, bonuses, and other extras I receive for my work. | | | | | | |
| 16 | The institution provides a fair and adequate compensation on retirement. | | | | | | |
| 17 | The retirement system in the institution makes me feel safe. | | | | | | |
| 18 | The fringe benefits such as rewards, bonuses, etc. in this institution are competitive. | | | | | | |
| 19 | The fringe benefits are allocated fairly and in a transparent manner. | | | | | | |
| 20 | The fringe benefits in this institution increase academic staff retention. | | | | | | |

### *C. Promotion*

| ***Promotion*** | | ***1*** | ***2*** | ***3*** | ***4*** | ***5*** | ***6*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***s/n*** | ***Statement*** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Disagree*** | ***Neither Agree nor Disagree*** | ***Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** | ***Not Applicable*** |
| 21 | There are good opportunities for promotion in the institution. | | | | | | |
| 22 | Promotion is always based on merit in this institution. | | | | | | |
| 23 | The promotion criteria in this institution over-emphasises publications at the expense of teaching and other duties. | | | | | | |
| 24 | Promotion opportunities in this institution are better than in other institutions. | | | | | | |
| 25 | Academic staff are promoted when they earn academic qualifications. | | | | | | |
| 26 | The promotion policy/criteria are clear in the institution. | | | | | | |
| 27 | What is stated in the promotion policy/criteria is always what is practised. | | | | | | |
| 28 | The promotion criteria in this institution over-emphasise teaching at the expense of publications and other duties. | | | | | | |
| 29 | Promotions in this institution are rarely based on merit. | | | | | | |
| 30 | I am satisfied with the promotion practices in this institution. | | | | | | |
| 31 | Academic staff's upward career growth is important to this institution. | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 | Promotion practices in this institution increase academic staff retention. | | | | | | |
| 33 | Failure to get promotion is one of the main reasons why academic staff leave this institution for employment elsewhere. | | | | | | |

**Section Three: Non-Financial Incentives**

Instructions: For each statement below, please tick the category that best describes your opinion about the non-financial incentives you receive from your current institution:

A. ***Leadership and supervision skills***

| ***Leadership and supervision skills*** | | ***1*** | ***2*** | ***3*** | ***4*** | ***5*** | ***6*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***s/n*** | ***Statement*** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Disagree*** | ***Neither Agree nor Disagree*** | ***Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** | ***Not Applicable*** |
| 34 | The organisational leadership style in this institution makes a positive contribution to the overall effectiveness of the institution. | | | | | | |
| 35 | My supervisor treats everyone fairly. | | | | | | |
| 36 | My supervisor assists academic staff in their personal problems. | | | | | | |
| 37 | My supervisor does not make me do things that go against my will and/or conscience. | | | | | | |
| 38 | My supervisor conveys my needs, ideas, and suggestions to his/her manager. | | | | | | |
| 39 | My supervisor often involves staff in decision making, problem solving, and policy making in the institution. | | | | | | |
| 40 | I have the opportunity to interact with management above my immediate supervisor. | | | | | | |
| 41 | In this institution, I have the opportunity to perform tasks that make use of my abilities. | | | | | | |
| 42 | The work in this institution provides me with the chance to be "somebody" in the community. | | | | | | |
| 43 | I am satisfied with the competence of the supervisors in this institution. | | | | | | |
| 44 | The leaders of this institution listen to staff issues and address them promptly. | | | | | | |
| 45 | My supervisor communicates to staff regularly on matters important to them. | | | | | | |
| 46 | I always receive feedback from my supervisor that helps to improve my performance. | | | | | | |
| 47 | I am satisfied with the leadership style of the managers in this institution. | | | | | | |
| 48 | The supervision skills and leadership style of the | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | management in this institution increase academic staff retention. | | | | | | |

### *B. Continuing professional development*

| ***Continuing professional development*** | | ***1*** | ***2*** | ***3*** | ***4*** | ***5*** | ***6*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***s/n*** | ***Statement*** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Disagree*** | ***Neither Agree nor Disagree*** | ***Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** | ***Not Applicable*** |
| 49 | The institution provides the opportunity for academic growth and career advancement. | | | | | | |
| 50 | The institution implements appropriate methods to raise the level of learning of its academic staff. | | | | | | |
| 51 | What is stated in the learning/training policy is always what is practised. | | | | | | |
| 52 | The skills and knowledge learnt on the job in this institution would transfer easily to most other similar institutions. | | | | | | |
| 53 | Training opportunities are offered regularly in this institution. | | | | | | |
| 54 | I am regularly given the opportunity to attend conferences and/or workshops to enhance my professional growth. | | | | | | |
| 55 | I am satisfied with the professional development opportunities provided by this institution. | | | | | | |
| 56 | Fairness is practised all the time in the implementation of learning/training policies for the academic staff. | | | | | | |
| 57 | This institution has good professional development opportunities compared with other institutions. | | | | | | |
| 58 | Overseas learning opportunities lead to staff resignation upon their return from study. | | | | | | |
| 59 | The professional development opportunities offered to the academic staff in this institution increase staff retention. | | | | | | |

### *C. Working conditions*

#### *a. Autonomy and work environment*

| ***Autonomy*** | | ***1*** | ***2*** | ***3*** | ***4*** | ***5*** | ***6*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***s/n*** | ***Statement*** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Disagree*** | ***Neither Agree nor Disagree*** | ***Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** | ***Not Applicable*** |
| 60 | I have the chance to try out my own methods of performing my job. | | | | | | |
| 61 | By and large, we have freedom of choice when it comes to the tasks we perform. | | | | | | |
| 62 | The institution gives convenient annual leave for its academic staff. | | | | | | |
| 63 | The institution provides steady employment. | | | | | | |
| 64 | I feel safe and secure in my job. | | | | | | |
| 65 | Working hours are flexible for academic staff in this institution. | | | | | | |
| 66 | The institution organises social activities and has recreational facilities for its academic staff. | | | | | | |
| 67 | Colleagues treat one another well within this institution. | | | | | | |
| 68 | I am satisfied with the overall working environment in the institution. | | | | | | |
| 69 | A positive working environment in this institution increases academic staff retention. | | | | | | |

#### *b. Infrastructure and resource*

| ***Infrastructure and resource*** | | ***1*** | ***2*** | ***3*** | ***4*** | ***5*** | ***6*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***s/n*** | ***Statement*** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Disagree*** | ***Neither Agree nor Disagree*** | ***Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** | ***Not Applicable*** |
| 70 | The institution provides appropriate and well-furnished offices for its academic staff. | | | | | | |
| 71 | Teaching resources that meet the work requirements are available in this institution. | | | | | | |
| 72 | I am satisfied with the infrastructure and resources available in this institution. | | | | | | |
| 73 | Teaching resources are developed continuously to keep pace with technological and information development. | | | | | | |
| 74 | Teaching resources offered to the academic staff in this institution increase their retention. | | | | | | |

### D. Recognition and appreciation

| ***Recognition and appreciation*** | | ***1*** | ***2*** | ***3*** | ***4*** | ***5*** | ***6*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***s/n*** | ***Statement*** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Disagree*** | ***Neither Agree nor Disagree*** | ***Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** | ***Not Applicable*** |
| 75 | The institution grants certificates of appreciation to recognise the achievements of its academic staff. | | | | | | |
| 76 | My supervisor appreciates my efforts at work. | | | | | | |
| 77 | I get praise when I am doing a good job. | | | | | | |
| 78 | A personal “thank you” from my supervisor or colleague is a form of recognition used in this institution. | | | | | | |
| 79 | I receive small gifts, such as watches, gift cards, restaurant vouchers, etc., as appreciation of my work. | | | | | | |
| 80 | I am satisfied with the recognition and appreciation I get from this institution. | | | | | | |
| 81 | I am treated with respect in the institution. | | | | | | |
| 82 | The recognition and appreciation shown to the academic staff in this institution increase staff retention. | | | | | | |

### E. Academic staff retention

| ***Academic staff retention*** | | ***1*** | ***2*** | ***3*** | ***4*** | ***5*** | ***6*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***s/n*** | ***Statement*** | ***Strongly Disagree*** | ***Disagree*** | ***Neither Agree nor Disagree*** | ***Agree*** | ***Strongly Agree*** | ***Not Applicable*** |
| 83 | I plan to work at my present job for as long as possible. | | | | | | |
| 84 | I am actively searching for an alternative to this institution. | | | | | | |
| 85 | I would hate to quit this job. | | | | | | |
| 86 | As soon as possible, I will leave the institution. | | | | | | |
| 87 | I am in this institution for lack of an alternative employer. | | | | | | |
| 88 | If I wanted to do another job or function, I would look first at the possibilities available within this institution. | | | | | | |
| 89 | It does not matter if I am working for this institution or another, as long as I have work. | | | | | | |
| 90 | If I received an attractive job offer from another institution/organisation, I would take the job. | | | | | | |

**Section Four: Ranking of Incentives**

91. If you were to leave your current position at your institution to accept a position in another institution or outside academia, how important would each of the following be in your decision?

1= Not important at all 2= Of little importance
3= Important 4= Very important

| s/n | Incentive type | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Not important at all | Of little importance | Important | Very important |
| A | Salary | | | | |
| B | Fringe benefits | | | | |
| C | Promotion | | | | |
| D | Leadership and supervision skills | | | | |
| E | Continuing professional development | | | | |
| F | Working conditions | | | | |
| G | Recognition and appreciation | | | | |

**Section Five: Other Incentives**

92. Kindly list any other incentives your institution offers that are not included in the survey:

93. Kindly list any other incentives that are not offered by your institution but you would like to be provided:

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION AND COOPERATION**

If you would like to be invited for an interview to discuss more about the topic, please provide your details below:

Name ______________________________ Email ____________________________
Telephone __________________________

# **Appendix B: Interview Guide for Academic Staff**

- Can you tell me about your job? What do you do and how do you feel about what you do? Do you enjoy it?

*If the previous questions are not answered, I can ask:*

- Do you like it here (Do you enjoy it here)? What are the things that you like or dislike in this institution?
- How did you come here? (Why did you apply to this institution? or Why did you choose to work for this institution in particular?)
- Do you think you will stay at this institution for much longer or are you thinking about possibly moving on? Can you tell me more about this? Is there any specific reason that makes you wish to stay/leave?
- Is there anything the institution doesn't do but it should do to retain its staff? What is it about this institution that would make you want to stay/leave?
- If you decided to leave, what would be the reason behind that?
- In your opinion, which are the more important incentives for retaining academic staff: financial incentives or non-financial incentives? Can you elaborate on that?

# Appendix C: Ethical Considerations

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

## College Research Ethics Review Feedback

## Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

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**Application Details**

Staff Research Ethics Application ☐ Postgraduate Student Research Ethics Application ☒

Application Number: 400170089

Applicant's Name: Amal Saif Mohammed Al-Qarshoubi

Project Title: Academic Staff Retention at Higher Education Institutions in the Sultanate of Oman: The Impact of Incentives

Application Status: Lead Review Complete - No Changes Required

Date of Administrative/Academic Review: 01/03/2018

***NB: Only if the applicant has been given approval can they proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval.***

---

**Recommendations** (where changes are required)

Where changes are required **all applicants must respond in the relevant boxes** to the recommendations of the Committee and upload this as the Resubmission Document through the system to explain the changes you have made to the application.

All resubmitted application documents should then be uploaded.

If your application is rejected a new application must be submitted via the online system. Where recommendations are provided, they should be responded to and this document uploaded as part of the new application. A new reference number will be generated.

| REVIEWER MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS | APPLICANT RESPONSE |
|---|---|
| | |

| REVIEWER MINOR RECOMMENDATIONS | APPLICANT RESPONSE |
|---|---|
| | |

| ADDITIONAL REVIEWER COMMENTS | APPLICANT RESPONSE |
|---|---|
| | |

| ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS | APPLICANT RESPONSE |
|---|---|
| **Application Form**<br><br>**Supporting Documentation** | |

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any enquiries, please email socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk.

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences
Florentine House, 53 Hillhead Street. Glasgow G12 8QF
The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

E-mail: socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

**College Research Ethics**

**Request for Amendments - Reviewer Feedback**

**Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects**

---

**Application Details**

Staff Research Ethics Application ☐ Postgraduate Student Research Ethics Application ☒

Application Number: 400170089

Applicant's Name: Amal Saif Mohammed Al-Qarshoubi

Project Title: Academic Staff Retention at Higher Education Institutions in the Sultanate of Oman: The Impact of Incentives

Original Date of Application Approval: 01/03/2018

End Date of Application Approval: 30/10/2019

Date of Amendments Approved: 04/07/2018

Outcome: Amendments Approved

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**Reviewer Comments**

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any enquiries, please email socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk.

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences
Florentine House, 53 Hillhead Street. Glasgow G12 8QF
The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

E-mail: socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

**Participant Information Sheet**

My name is **Amal Saif Al-Qarshoubi**, a PhD student at the University of Glasgow. My research is on:

**Academic Staff Retention in Higher Education Institutions in the Sultanate of Oman: The Impact of Incentives**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. This research is funded by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

**Purpose of research**

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of incentives on academic staff retention in higher education institutions in Oman.

**Why you have been chosen**

You have been chosen to take part in this research because you are an academic staff member at a higher education institution.

**What you are being asked to do**

In order for me to understand staff perspectives and to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic, you are being asked to take part in a one-to-one interview. This will take no longer than one hour and, with your permission, will be audio-recorded.

**You are not obliged to take part**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you decide not to participate in the research, this will have no effect on your employment.

**Confidentiality**

- Your personal data will be used solely for research and publication purposes and will not be shared with any third party.
- Your involvement in the study will be kept strictly confidential and your comments will be anonymised.
- Participants' names will be replaced by codes and pseudonyms.
- The results will only be presented in aggregate form. It will not be possible to identify any participant, as respondents' details, e.g. institution and position, will not be disclosed.
- Please be aware that confidentiality will be strictly adhered to, unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm. In such cases, the University of Glasgow may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.
- The participants' data will be saved on the University of Glasgow drive, which is highly secure and can be accessed only by password. Any hard copies generated by the process will be stored in locked cabinets in a locked room.
- The participants' data will be retained for a maximum of 3 years, i.e., during the period of my PhD study. After this time, all electronic files will be deleted and all papers related to the research will be destroyed.

**The results of the study**

The data collected will be used for research and publication purposes only. Research data will be saved on the University of Glasgow drive and any hard copies generated by the process will be stored in locked cabinets in a locked room. In line with University of Glasgow Research Guidelines, the data will be retained for 10 years after completion of the project. All participants can obtain a written summary of the results by sending a request to the researcher.

**Review of the proposed study**

This project has been reviewed and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee.

For further information or to pursue a complaint, please contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, **Dr Muir Houston at Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk**

Amal Al-Qarshoubi

Email: a.al-qarshoubi.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Research supervisor: Dr Kristinn Hermannsson Kristinn.hermannsson@glasgow.ac.uk

College of Social Sciences

## Consent Form

**Title of Project: Academic Staff Retention at Higher Education Institutions in the Sultanate of Oman: The Impact of Incentives**

**Name of Researcher: Amal Saif Mohammed Al-Qarshoubi**

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I understand that:
   - The interview will be audio-recorded and will be used for research and academic publication purposes only.
   - Participants will be referred to by pseudonym.
   - There will be no effect on my employment arising from my participation or non-participation in this research.
   - The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
   - The material will be destroyed once the project is completed.

4. Please tick one of the choices below:
   I agree to take part in this research study ☐
   I do not agree to take part in this research study ☐

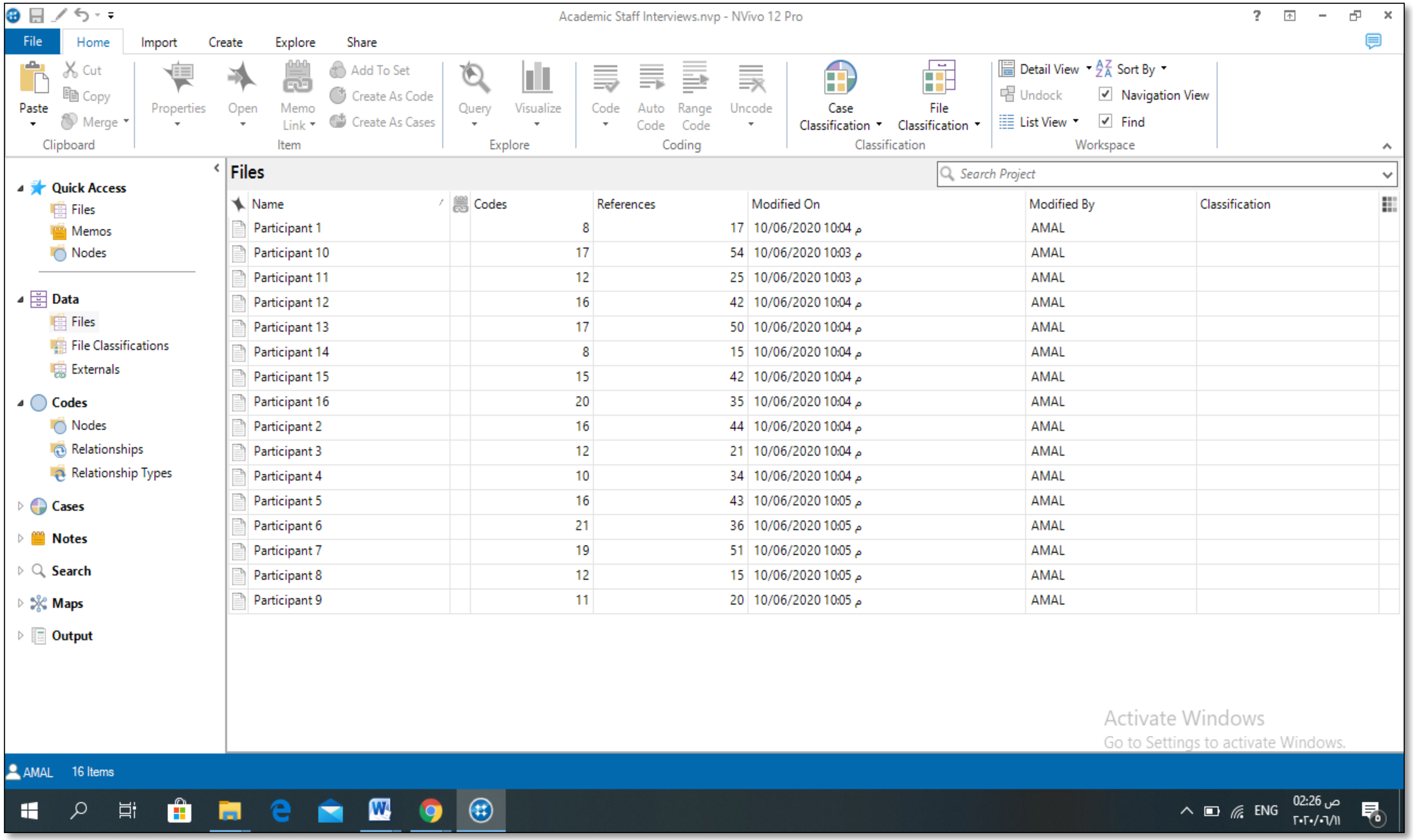
| Name of Participant | Signature | Date |
|---|---|---|

**Amal Al-Qarshoubi**

| Name of Researcher | Signature | Date |
|---|---|---|

**End of consent form ………………………**

# Appendix D: Coding in NVivo




| Name | Codes | References | Modified On | Modified By | Classification |
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| Participant 10 | 17 | 54 | 10/06/2020 10:03 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 11 | 12 | 25 | 10/06/2020 10:03 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 12 | 16 | 42 | 10/06/2020 10:04 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 13 | 17 | 50 | 10/06/2020 10:04 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 14 | 8 | 15 | 10/06/2020 10:04 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 15 | 15 | 42 | 10/06/2020 10:04 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 16 | 20 | 35 | 10/06/2020 10:04 م | AMAL | |
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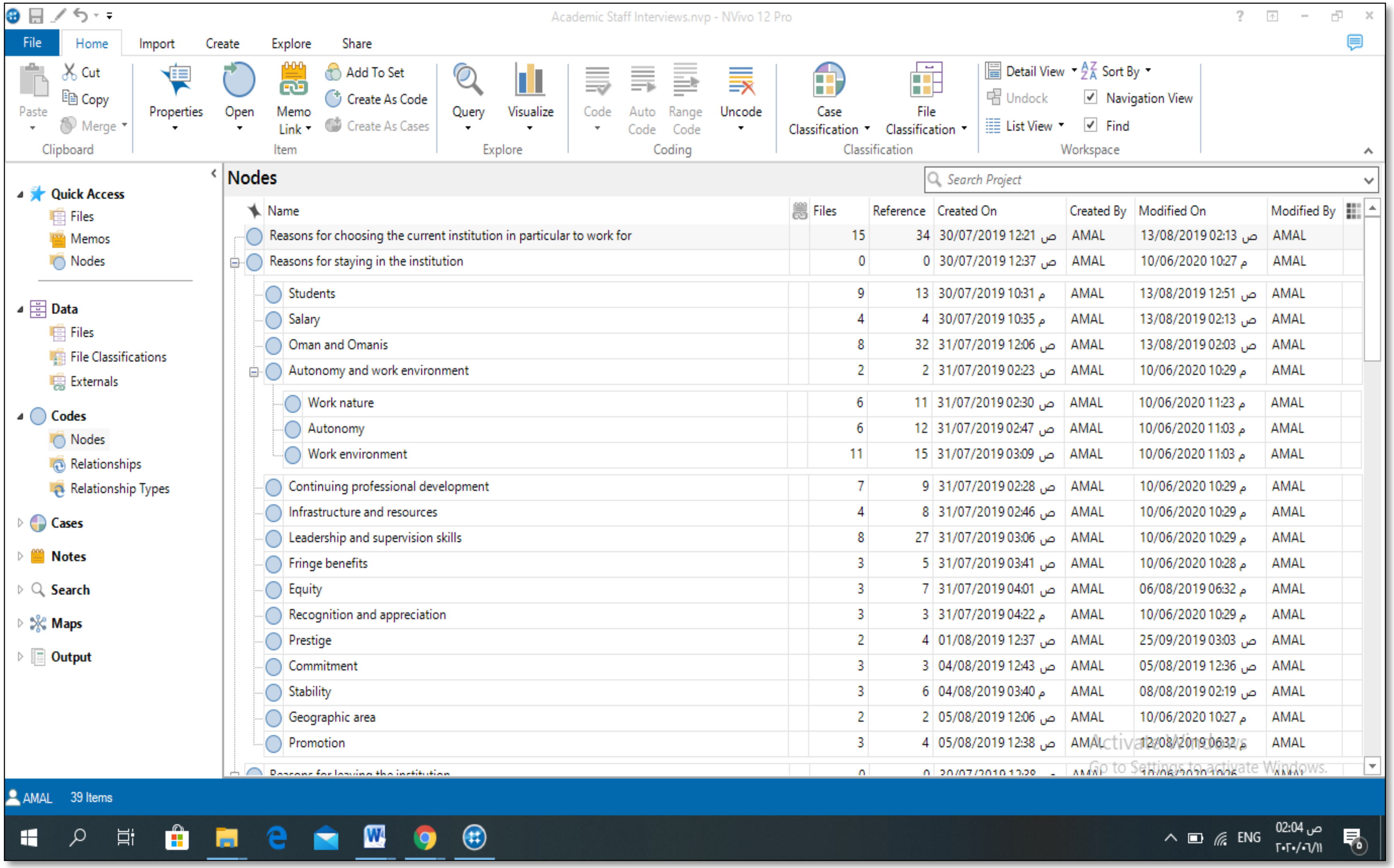
| Participant 3 | 12 | 21 | 10/06/2020 10:04 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 4 | 10 | 34 | 10/06/2020 10:04 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 5 | 16 | 43 | 10/06/2020 10:05 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 6 | 21 | 36 | 10/06/2020 10:05 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 7 | 19 | 51 | 10/06/2020 10:05 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 8 | 12 | 15 | 10/06/2020 10:05 م | AMAL | |
| Participant 9 | 11 | 20 | 10/06/2020 10:05 م | AMAL | |


Academic Staff Interviews.nvp - NVivo 12 Pro
File
Home
Import
Create
Explore
Share
Paste
Cut
Copy
Merge
Clipboard
Properties
Open
Memo Link
Add To Set
Create As Code
Create As Cases
Item
Query
Visualize
Explore
Code
Auto Code
Range Code
Uncode
Coding
Case Classification
File Classification
Classification
Detail View
Sort By
Undock
Navigation View
List View
Find
Workspace
Quick Access
Files
Memos
Nodes
Data
Files
File Classifications
Externals
Codes
Nodes
Relationships
Relationship Types
Cases
Notes
Search
Maps
Output
Nodes
Search Project
Name | Files | Reference | Created On | Created By | Modified On | Modified By
Reasons for choosing the current institution in particular to work for | 15 | 34 | 30/07/2019 12:21 ص | AMAL | 13/08/2019 02:13 ص | AMAL
Reasons for staying in the institution | 0 | 0 | 30/07/2019 12:37 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:27 م | AMAL
Students | 9 | 13 | 30/07/2019 10:31 م | AMAL | 13/08/2019 12:51 ص | AMAL
Salary | 4 | 4 | 30/07/2019 10:35 م | AMAL | 13/08/2019 02:13 ص | AMAL
Oman and Omanis | 8 | 32 | 31/07/2019 12:06 ص | AMAL | 13/08/2019 02:03 ص | AMAL
Autonomy and work environment | 2 | 2 | 31/07/2019 02:23 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:29 م | AMAL
Work nature | 6 | 11 | 31/07/2019 02:30 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 11:23 م | AMAL
Autonomy | 6 | 12 | 31/07/2019 02:47 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 11:03 م | AMAL
Work environment | 11 | 15 | 31/07/2019 03:09 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 11:03 م | AMAL
Continuing professional development | 7 | 9 | 31/07/2019 02:28 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:29 م | AMAL
Infrastructure and resources | 4 | 8 | 31/07/2019 02:46 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:29 م | AMAL
Leadership and supervision skills | 8 | 27 | 31/07/2019 03:06 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:29 م | AMAL
Fringe benefits | 3 | 5 | 31/07/2019 03:41 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:28 م | AMAL
Equity | 3 | 7 | 31/07/2019 04:01 ص | AMAL | 06/08/2019 06:32 م | AMAL
Recognition and appreciation | 3 | 3 | 31/07/2019 04:22 م | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:29 م | AMAL
Prestige | 2 | 4 | 01/08/2019 12:37 ص | AMAL | 25/09/2019 03:03 ص | AMAL
Commitment | 3 | 3 | 04/08/2019 12:43 ص | AMAL | 05/08/2019 12:36 ص | AMAL
Stability | 3 | 6 | 04/08/2019 03:40 م | AMAL | 08/08/2019 02:19 ص | AMAL
Geographic area | 2 | 2 | 05/08/2019 12:06 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:27 م | AMAL
Promotion | 3 | 4 | 05/08/2019 12:38 ص | AMAL | 12/08/2019 06:32 م | AMAL
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39 Items
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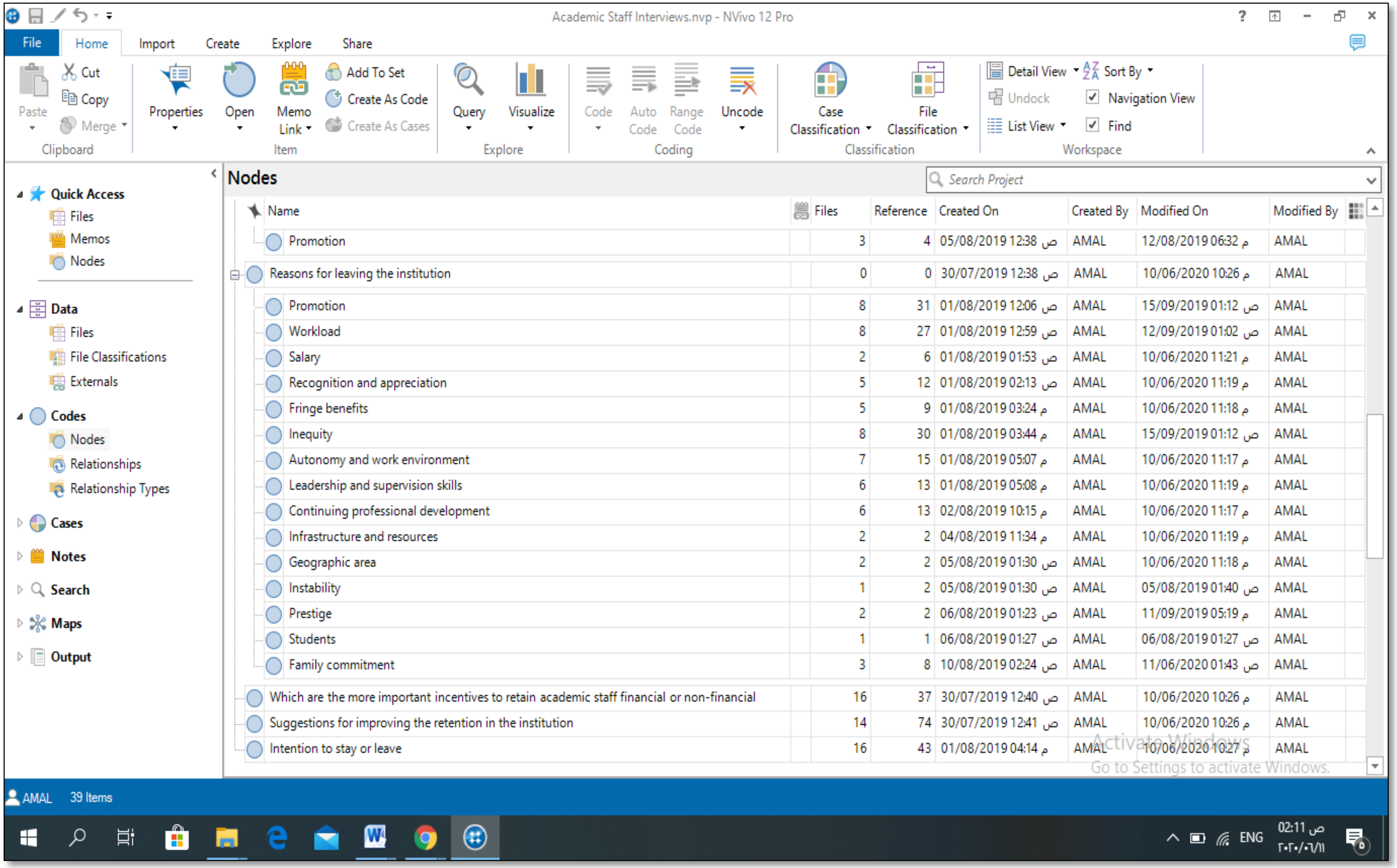
02:04 ص



Academic Staff Interviews.nvp - NVivo 12 Pro
File
Home
Import
Create
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Add To Set
Create As Code
Create As Cases
Item
Query
Visualize
Explore
Code
Auto Code
Range Code
Uncode
Coding
Case Classification
File Classification
Classification
Detail View
Sort By
Undock
Navigation View
List View
Find
Workspace
Quick Access
Files
Memos
Nodes
Data
Files
File Classifications
Externals
Codes
Nodes
Relationships
Relationship Types
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Notes
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Name | Files | Reference | Created On | Created By | Modified On | Modified By
Promotion | 3 | 4 | 05/08/2019 12:38 ص | AMAL | 12/08/2019 06:32 م | AMAL
Reasons for leaving the institution | 0 | 0 | 30/07/2019 12:38 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:26 م | AMAL
Promotion | 8 | 31 | 01/08/2019 12:06 ص | AMAL | 15/09/2019 01:12 ص | AMAL
Workload | 8 | 27 | 01/08/2019 12:59 ص | AMAL | 12/09/2019 01:02 ص | AMAL
Salary | 2 | 6 | 01/08/2019 01:53 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 11:21 م | AMAL
Recognition and appreciation | 5 | 12 | 01/08/2019 02:13 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 11:19 م | AMAL
Fringe benefits | 5 | 9 | 01/08/2019 03:24 م | AMAL | 10/06/2020 11:18 م | AMAL
Inequity | 8 | 30 | 01/08/2019 03:44 م | AMAL | 15/09/2019 01:12 ص | AMAL
Autonomy and work environment | 7 | 15 | 01/08/2019 05:07 م | AMAL | 10/06/2020 11:17 م | AMAL
Leadership and supervision skills | 6 | 13 | 01/08/2019 05:08 م | AMAL | 10/06/2020 11:19 م | AMAL
Continuing professional development | 6 | 13 | 02/08/2019 10:15 م | AMAL | 10/06/2020 11:17 م | AMAL
Infrastructure and resources | 2 | 2 | 04/08/2019 11:34 م | AMAL | 10/06/2020 11:19 م | AMAL
Geographic area | 2 | 2 | 05/08/2019 01:30 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 11:18 م | AMAL
Instability | 1 | 2 | 05/08/2019 01:30 ص | AMAL | 05/08/2019 01:40 ص | AMAL
Prestige | 2 | 2 | 06/08/2019 01:23 ص | AMAL | 11/09/2019 05:19 م | AMAL
Students | 1 | 1 | 06/08/2019 01:27 ص | AMAL | 06/08/2019 01:27 ص | AMAL
Family commitment | 3 | 8 | 10/08/2019 02:24 ص | AMAL | 11/06/2020 01:43 ص | AMAL
Which are the more important incentives to retain academic staff financial or non-financial | 16 | 37 | 30/07/2019 12:40 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:26 م | AMAL
Suggestions for improving the retention in the institution | 14 | 74 | 30/07/2019 12:41 ص | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:26 م | AMAL
Intention to stay or leave | 16 | 43 | 01/08/2019 04:14 م | AMAL | 10/06/2020 10:27 م | AMAL
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39 Items
ENG
02:11 ص
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# Appendix E: Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

| N | Item | Label | Communality | Component | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 1 | The salary I earn is adequate to meet my needs and aspirations | SAL1 | .745 | | | | | | | .795 | | |
| 2 | The institution offers attractive allowances (e.g. housing, electricity, water, transportation, telephone) to academic staff | SAL2 | .504 | | | | | | | .582 | | |
| 3 | I am satisfied with the amount of salary I earn compared to other employees in other organisations with similar qualifications | SAL3 | .788 | | | | | | | .825 | | |
| 4 | I am satisfied with the amount of salary I earn compared to other academic staff in this institution with similar qualifications | SAL4 | .709 | | | | | | | .779 | | |
| 5 | The institution provides rewards for skilled academic staff that match their performance | FRB1 | .707 | | | | .712 | | | | | |
| 6 | The institution provides bonuses for academic staff according to their position and consistent with their level of performance | FRB2 | .721 | | | | .765 | | | | | |
| 7 | I am satisfied with the amount of rewards, bonuses and other extras I receive for my work | FRB3 | .638 | | | | .582 | | | | | |
| 8 | The fringe benefits such as rewards, bonuses, etc. at this institution are competitive | FRB4 | .761 | | | | .773 | | | | | |
| 9 | The fringe benefits are allocated fairly and in a transparent manner | FRB5 | .687 | | | | .666 | | | | | |
| 10 | There are good opportunities for promotion at the institution | PRO1 | .711 | | .743 | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Promotion is always based on merit at this institution | PRO2 | .706 | | .661 | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Promotion opportunities at this institution are better than at other institutions | PRO3 | .633 | | .627 | | | | | | | |
| 13 | Academic staff are promoted when they earn academic qualifications | PRO4 | .545 | | .677 | | | | | | | |
| 14 | The promotion policy/criteria are clear at the institution | PRO5 | .675 | | .687 | | | | | | | |
| 15 | What is stated in the promotion policy/criteria is always what is practised | PRO6 | .777 | | .762 | | | | | | | |
| 16 | I am satisfied with the promotion practices at this institution | PRO7 | .794 | | .753 | | | | | | | |
| 17 | The supervisor assists the academic staff with their personal problems | LSS1 | .638 | .724 | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | The supervisor conveys my needs, ideas and suggestions to his/her manager | LSS2 | .712 | .684 | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | The supervisor often involves staff in decision-making, problem-solving and policy-making at the institution | LSS3 | .732 | .747 | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | I have the opportunity to interact with management above my immediate supervisor | LSS4 | .579 | .653 | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | I am satisfied with the competence of the supervisors at this institution | LSS5 | .734 | .682 | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | The leaders of this institution listen to and address staff issues promptly | LSS6 | .736 | .695 | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | The supervisor communicates to staff regularly on matters important to them | LSS7 | .761 | .751 | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | I always receive feedback from my supervisor that helps improve my performance | LSS8 | .771 | .790 | | | | | | | | |
| 25 | The institution provides the opportunity for academic growth and career advancement | CPD1 | .712 | | | .660 | | | | | | |
| 26 | The institution implements appropriate methods to raise the level of learning for its academic staff | CPD2 | .773 | | | .651 | | | | | | |
| 27 | Training opportunities are offered regularly at this institution | CPD3 | .773 | | | .750 | | | | | | |
| 28 | I am regularly given the opportunity to attend conferences and/or workshops to enhance my professional growth | CPD4 | .711 | | | .711 | | | | | | |
| 29 | I am satisfied with the professional development opportunities provided by this institution | CPD5 | .812 | | | .759 | | | | | | |
| 30 | The learning/training policy for academic staff is always implemented fairly | CPD6 | .710 | | | .581 | | | | | | |
| 31 | This institution has good professional development opportunities compared with other institutions | CPD7 | .717 | | | .637 | | | | | | |
| 32 | I have the opportunity to try out my own methods for performing my job | AWE1 | .637 | | | | | .529 | | | | |
| 33 | In large part, we have freedom of choice when it comes to the tasks we perform | AWE2 | .597 | | | | | .538 | | | | |
| 34 | The institution gives convenient annual leave for academic staff | AWE3 | .513 | | | | | .547 | | | | |
| 35 | The institution provides steady employment | AWE4 | .683 | | | | | .701 | | | | |
| 36 | I feel safe and secure in my job | AWE5 | .707 | | | | | .702 | | | | |
| 37 | The working hours are flexible for academic staff at this institution | AWE6 | .588 | | | | | .675 | | | | |
| 38 | Colleagues treat one another well within this institution | AWE7 | .534 | | | | | .540 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39 | The institution provides appropriate and well-furnished offices for its academic staff | IAR1 | .694 | | | | | | .706 | | | |
| 40 | Teaching resources are available in this institution that meet the work requirements | IAR2 | .819 | | | | | | .754 | | | |
| 41 | I am satisfied with the infrastructure and resources available in this institution | IAR3 | .853 | | | | | | .778 | | | |
| 42 | Teaching resources are developed continuously to keep pace with technological and information development | IAR4 | .786 | | | | | | .671 | | | |
| 43 | The institution grants certificates of appreciation to recognise the achievements of its academic staff | RAA1 | .616 | | | | | | | | | .604 |
| 44 | My supervisor appreciates my efforts at work | RAA2 | .824 | | | | | | | | | .668 |
| 45 | I get praise when I am doing a good job | RAA3 | .851 | | | | | | | | | .688 |
| 46 | A personal “thank you” from my supervisor or colleague is a form of recognition used at this institution | RAA4 | .717 | | | | | | | | | .614 |
| 47 | I am actively searching for an alternative to this institution | ASR1 | .757 | | | | | | | | .818 | |
| 48 | As soon as possible, I will leave this institution | ASR2 | .751 | | | | | | | | .743 | |
| 49 | I am in this institution for lack of an alternative employer | ASR3 | .659 | | | | | | | | .708 | |
| 50 | If I received an attractive job offer from another institution/organisation, I would take it | ASR4 | .575 | | | | | | | | .661 | |

Overall Measure of Sampling Adequacy: .950
Cronbach’s alpha: .970

# Appendix F: Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

| N | Construct | Item | Communality | Factor Loading | Sampling Adequacy | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Salary | SAL1 | .738 | .859 | .781 | .841 |
| 2 | | SAL2 | .524 | .724 | | |
| 3 | | SAL3 | .759 | .871 | | |
| 4 | | SAL4 | .680 | .825 | | |
| 5 | Fringe Benefits | FRB1 | .696 | .834 | .843 | .903 |
| 6 | | FRB2 | .677 | .823 | | |
| 7 | | FRB3 | .637 | .798 | | |
| 8 | | FRB4 | .761 | .873 | | |
| 9 | | FRB5 | .684 | .827 | | |
| 10 | Promotion | PRO1 | .703 | .839 | .907 | .922 |
| 11 | | PRO2 | .697 | .835 | | |
| 12 | | PRO3 | .623 | .790 | | |
| 13 | | PRO4 | .466 | .683 | | |
| 14 | | PRO5 | .675 | .822 | | |
| 15 | | PRO6 | .771 | .878 | | |
| 16 | | PRO7 | .797 | .893 | | |
| 17 | Leadership and Supervision Skills | LSS1 | .574 | .758 | .935 | .935 |
| 18 | | LSS2 | .695 | .834 | | |
| 19 | | LSS3 | .723 | .850 | | |
| 20 | | LSS4 | .561 | .749 | | |
| 21 | | LSS5 | .702 | .838 | | |
| 22 | | LSS6 | .689 | .830 | | |
| 23 | | LSS7 | .762 | .873 | | |
| 24 | | LSS8 | .759 | .871 | | |
| 25 | Continuing Professional Development | CPD1 | .725 | .851 | .932 | .940 |
| 26 | | CPD2 | .768 | .876 | | |
| 27 | | CPD3 | .737 | .858 | | |
| 28 | | CPD4 | .694 | .833 | | |
| 29 | | CPD5 | .796 | .892 | | |
| 30 | | CPD6 | .704 | .839 | | |
| 31 | | CPD7 | .709 | .842 | | |
| 32 | Autonomy and Work Environment | AWE1 | .609 | .781 | .834 | .860 |
| 33 | | AWE2 | .571 | .756 | | |
| 34 | | AWE3 | .399 | .631 | | |
| 35 | | AWE4 | .579 | .761 | | |
| 36 | | AWE5 | .628 | .792 | | |
| 37 | | AWE6 | .499 | .706 | | |
| 38 | | AWE7 | .507 | .712 | | |
| 39 | Infrastructure and Resources | IAR1 | .685 | .828 | .823 | .911 |
| 40 | | IAR2 | .828 | .910 | | |
| 41 | | IAR3 | .857 | .926 | | |
| 42 | | IAR4 | .789 | .888 | | |
| 43 | Recognition and Appreciation | RAA1 | .540 | .735 | .807 | .879 |
| 44 | | RAA2 | .821 | .906 | | |
| 45 | | RAA3 | .844 | .919 | | |
| 46 | | RAA4 | .722 | .850 | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 47 | Academic Staff Retention | ASR1 | .715 | .846 | .773 | .826 |
| 48 | | ASR2 | .734 | .857 | | |
| 49 | | ASR3 | .666 | .816 | | |
| 50 | | ASR4 | .494 | .703 | | |

## Appendix G: Demographic Data Relating to Interview Participants

| Participant | Institution Type | Nationality | Gender | Age | Level of Education | Academic Ranking | Teaching Experience in Current Institution | Leadership Position | Speciality | Teaching Hours per Week |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PrivE1 | Private | Non-Omani | Female | 45-49 | PhD | Assistant Professor | 5-10 | Yes | Engineering | 13-20 |
| PubE1 | Public | Non-Omani | Female | 55 and over | Master’s | Lecturer | More than 15 years | No | Arts and Social Sciences | 13-20 |
| PrivO1 | Private | Omani | Male | 40-44 | PhD | Assistant Professor | 1-4 | Yes | Business Studies and Information Technology | 5-12 |
| PrivE2 | Private | Non-Omani | Female | 50-54 | PhD | Lecturer | 11-15 | Yes | Arts and Social Sciences | 5-12 |
| PubO1 | Public | Omani | Female | 35-39 | PhD | Assistant Professor | 11-15 | Yes | Business Studies and Information Technology | 5-12 |
| PubE2 | Public | Non-Omani | Female | 50-54 | Master’s | Lecturer | 11-15 | No | Medicine and Health Sciences | More than 20 |
| PubO2 | Public | Omani | Male | 35-39 | PhD | Assistant Professor | 5-10 | No | Arts and Social Sciences | 5-12 |
| PrivO2 | Private | Omani | Male | 40-44 | PhD | Assistant Professor | 5-10 | Yes | Arts and Social Sciences | 4 or less |
| PrivE3 | Private | Non-Omani | Male | 40-44 | PhD | Associate Professor | 11-15 | Yes | Medicine and Health Sciences | 5-12 |
| PrivE4 | Private | Non-Omani | Female | 45-49 | PhD | Assistant Professor | 5-10 | Yes | Business Studies and Information Technology | 5-12 |
| PrivE5 | Private | Non-Omani | Male | 45-49 | PhD | Professor | 1-4 | Yes | Engineering | 5-12 |
| PubO3 | Public | Omani | Male | 45-49 | PhD | Assistant Professor | 11-15 | Yes | Business Studies and Information | 4 or less |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | Technology | |
| PubE3 | Public | Non-Omani | Male | 50-54 | PhD | Associate Professor | Less than a year | No | Arts and Social Sciences | 5-12 |
| PrivE6 | Private | Non-Omani | Male | 30-34 | Master’s | Lecturer | 1-4 | No | Business Studies and Information Technology | 13-20 |
| PubO4 | Public | Omani | Female | 35-39 | PhD | Lecturer | 11-15 | No | Science | 5-12 |
| PubO5 | Public | Omani | Male | 45-49 | PhD | Associate Professor | More than 15 years | No | Arts and Social Sciences | 5-12 |