

Organisational Commitment and Turnover Intentions: Does Self-Efficacy Matter?

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Article History

Received 2023-06-29

Reviewed 2023-10-23

Accepted 2023-10-25

Published 2023-11-04

Keywords

Organisational Commitment

Self-efficacy

Turnover intentions

Universities

Uganda

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Purpose- This paper examined the relationship between organisational commitment, self-efficacy, and turnover intentions among academic staff in universities in Uganda, a developing nation.

Design/Methodology- This research was undertaken via a cross-sectional research design to test the hypotheses using quantitative data collected from 574 academic staff at selected universities in Uganda. Hayes's PROCESS macro (Version 4.2) was used to carry out a moderation analysis.

Findings- The results indicate that interaction between self-efficacy and organisational commitment enhanced turnover intention. Academic staff with high levels of commitment, are less likely to engage in turnover behaviour at high levels of self-efficacy.

Practical Implications- Drawing on empirical evidence, university managers seeking to improve staff retention need to adopt strategies that boost self-efficacy in order to instantly support organisational commitment. Adoption of participative work culture, equity, training, teamwork, and inclusiveness is an important signal and source of social information that the university values its employees and their stay.

Introduction

In the contemporary world, institutional stability and survival are dependent on the ability to retain talent (Abdullah *et al.*, 2010; Dordunu *et al.*, 2020). This means that organisations need to manage their human resources as a tool for competitive advantage, providing employees with competitive conditions of service in the wake of the war on talent (Abdullahi *et al.*, 2022; Hussain *et al.*, 2020). In this process, employers have instituted family-friendly HR policies to retain employees (Ali, 2018). Nonetheless, organisations continue to face the immense challenge of keeping employees for a long time (Oruh *et al.*, 2020), as they voluntarily seek to transfer their services (Doherty, 2013). As more people leave the organisation, those who stay may question their decision to stay. Presence of high cases of turnover can cause a wagon effect (Awang *et al.*, 2016), indicating that those still present have intentions of leaving (Hamzat *et al.*, 2020; Kaufmann *et al.*, 2022). Turnover intention (TI) refers to the likelihood that someone may quit in the near future, causing a negative impact on organisational performance (Moon, 2017; Wynen *et al.*, 2019) due to the loss of the most talented and experienced staff. Indeed, high turnover has social and financial implications for the institution in terms of eroded morale among the remaining employees, negative institutional image, recruitment and training costs, and poor service (Owence *et al.*, 2014; Shofiatul *et al.*, 2016).

Based on global estimates, turnover prevalence is high and continues to rise in many countries (Hom *et al.*, 2017), with France at 24.4%, Italy at 21%, the US at 18.6%, and South Africa at 12.2%. Furthermore, in terms of sectors, the social services sector, where education belongs, ranked highest with 18.5% TI (Gyensare, 2016). From the perspective of universities, globally, the US loses 40%, while Australia reports a 68% loss of faculty annually (Ng'ethe, 2014). In Africa, faculty TI in South Africa ranges between 5% and 18% (Ngatuni & Matoka, 2020). In Tanzania, Ngatuni and Matoka (2020) reported TI to be 39% and 45.5% at the University of Dodoma and Dar es Salaam, respectively. In Uganda, the situation is no better, as some departments at Makerere University operate at 40% below capacity (Rwendeirwe, 2017). According to Tumwesigye *et al.* (2020), Makerere lost 68, Kyambogo lost 38, Gulu and Kampala International both lost 26, Mbarara lost 26, and Ndejje University lost 17 academic staff. According to these statistics, TI and its associated effects are a necessary evil that universities should deal with (Labrague *et al.*, 2020; Ployhart *et al.*, 2014). As such, these persistent staff departures are likely to undermine Uganda's effort to attain Vision 2040, as universities cannot produce quality graduates (Mwesigwa *et al.*, 2020). This raises the key question of what strategies could be embraced to improve staff retention in developing economies such as Uganda. Existing studies have shown that TI is predicted by various demographic, workplace, and organisational factors (Jung *et al.*, 2017; Pitts *et al.*, 2011; Sun & Wang, 2017; Van Waeyenberg *et al.*, 2017; Wynen *et al.*, 2020). Scholars like Bruyneel *et al.* (2017), Chong and Monroe (2015), and Gertsson *et al.* (2017) associate TI with job satisfaction, occupational burnout, career progression, job commitment, and compensation systems. These studies seem to provide factors that explain TI in different contexts, providing a theoretical gap to examine the factors that explain TI in the Ugandan university domain.

For this, organisational commitment is particularly explored as an essential approach to mitigating TI (Hafiz, 2017; Islam *et al.*, 2015). Organisational commitment relates to the positive feelings that employees develop for their organisations (Akyüz & Durmuş, 2022), built around the social relations among the actors (Makela *et al.*, 2021). In today's knowledge-based economy, service organisations depend on the overwhelming staff commitment to attain the organisational intent (Knapp *et al.*, 2017). As an attitude and behaviour, commitment shapes how employees act and respond to organisational activities. Usually, committed employees work optimally by devoting attention, thoughts, energy, and time (Hadian, 2017; Mwesigwa *et al.*, 2020). Because of their dedication, enthusiasm, and involvement in organisational activities, they develop a strong emotional bond that encourages them to stay in their organisation (Albrecht & Marty, 2020). Therefore, organisational commitment can be discerned at affective (motivation to achieve goals), normative (sense of obligation), and continuance (desire to stay or leave is attached to costs) levels. However, the literature shows most studies have

focused on the affective domain in explaining TI (Muyigwa *et al.*, 2020), pausing a conceptualization gap. As such, this study adopts the multi-facet approach (Faeq, 2022; Kipkebut, 2013) to predict TI in the university context since each facet has different implications for the decision to quit.

Despite the plethora of studies linking organisational commitment to turnover intentions (Agarwal & Sajid, 2017; Ausar *et al.*, 2016; Bothma & Roodt, 2013; Faloye, 2014; Jano *et al.*, 2019; Lakshman *et al.*, 2022), the results are mixed and contradictory. In addition, a few studies have been conducted in emerging economies like Uganda. Further, research on this relationship in the academic sector in Uganda is scanty (Muyigwa *et al.*, 2020). From the above evidence, it seems that there could be certain contextual conditions under which turnover intentions occur that current studies haven't explored (Abbas *et al.*, 2014). In response to this call (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018; Hancock *et al.*, 2013), this study introduces the self-efficacy mechanism as an individual difference variable to validate the complex path between organisational commitment and TI (Otori *et al.*, 2018).

Self-efficacy (SE) is derived from the field of positive organisational behaviour (Luthans & Youssef, 2007) and is useful as a resilient individual resource in adapting to complex work situations (Khalid *et al.*, 2021). SE represents a person's motivation and ability to accomplish specific tasks successfully (Bandura, 2012). In this study, SE is equated to a situational-specific confidence trait that influences one's decision to stay or leave (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018). As proposed, SE is an indirect determinant that defines and maintains the employee-employer relationship (Albrecht & Marty, 2020). An interplay of SE, OC, and TI creates a stronger bond among highly efficacious lecturers than among the least efficacious lecturers. This is because lecturers' actions are guided by beliefs that are activated in challenging situations (Dicke *et al.*, 2018). Highly efficacious staff persevere by demonstrating emotional attachment, which reduces turnover intention (Fernandez *et al.*, 2016), unlike their low-efficacious counterparts (Munir *et al.*, 2016). Despite calls for more empirical evidence on the moderating mechanism of SE, studies in the educational sphere are limited (Lin & Liu, 2017). Secondly, the concept has attracted less attention in research (Çelik *et al.*, 2016), with no clear mechanism for how self-efficacy influences turnover intention (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018).

Our study adheres to the principles of the SET and SCT to tackle the identified gaps. Therefore, this study intends to assess the moderator role of SE in the nexus between organisational commitment and TI by the academic staff in this era where universities are seen as a path of economic, social, and political development that needs to be explored, hence this study. Accordingly, this study makes a three-fold contribution: First, to examine the effect of OC on TI. Second, it adopts self-efficacy as an individual positive factor of organisational behaviour instead of organisational factors. Thirdly, it assesses the underlying role of SE in the nexus between OC and TI in a developing context where there is scanty evidence on SE's moderator role. This study focuses on the academic staff at both public and private sector universities in Uganda. The remaining part of the paper contains: study setting, literature review and hypotheses, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion, implications, and limitations.

Literature Review

Study Setting

The Ugandan higher education has undergone reforms. Before independence, Uganda only had Makerere University as a public university. However, after adopting the structural adjustment programs in exchange for monetary aid from the world bank, the education sector was among those liberalised, giving birth to private universities in 1988. Regulated by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), Uganda has over 35 accredited public and private universities today. Universities are key stakeholders in shaping the human capital inventories through teaching, research and service. Today, universities provide skills for national economic,

social, moral, and political transformation, enhancing chances of Uganda's ability to compete in the volatile global knowledge economy. However, universities in Uganda have faced a number of challenges such as: limited funding, low performance, low commitment and increased turnover. In the context of this study, the selected universities face increased staff turnover. According to Tumwesigye *et al.* (2020), Makerere lost 68, Kyambogo lost 38, Gulu and Kampala International both lost 26, Mbarara lost 26 and Ndejje university lost 17 academic staff. The situation has been made worse with the expansion of higher education, population growth, increased number of students, and NCHE quality assurance requirements (Ddungu, 2014). This has accelerated faculty mobility. As such, universities must manage turnover intentions in their quest to support the sustainable development of Uganda through quality education for a knowledge-based workforce. To stay competitive, university management needs to develop an academic environment that is conducive for enhanced academic staff commitment and stay.

Theoretical Foundation

Our study builds on previous research to determine how OC influences TI from a social exchange (SET) perspective (Blau, 1964; Hussain *et al.*, 2020). According to SET, the employment relationship goes beyond the contractual terms (money) to include other social aspects that make the association long-lasting. As far as the rule of reciprocity goes, the beneficial acts extended by one party to another must be reciprocated (Tsen *et al.*, 2022). This study hypothesises that when the university commits to taking care of its employees and offers beneficial acts, it obligates academic staff to return some beneficial acts to the university (Lew, 2009). However, negative perceptions of employer actions can impact employee-employer interactions, leading to turnover intentions. Employees may leave or become more committed based on their perception of the treatment. Turnover intentions are higher when employees perceive less advantageous employer actions (Jang & Kandampully, 2018).

Similarly, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) introduced the contribution of self-efficacy towards enhancing the effect of OC on TI (Bandura, 1977). This theory holds that learning occurs through observation. That is, people can witness and observe behaviour or actions performed by others and then try to reproduce them. Hence, observing people with a positive self-efficacy outlook enables one to build persistence in the face of adversity to reach the goal (commitment), thus reducing turnover intention (Otori *et al.*, 2018). Conversely, people with low self-efficacy doubt their abilities, imagine failure, have no clear past success experiences to refer to, and have low self-motivation to perform and meet job demands. Thus, this lack of belief in their abilities can contribute to lower levels of OC (due to low emotional and continuance investment) and higher TI (Çelik *et al.*, 2016).

Hypotheses Development

Organisational Commitment and Turnover Intentions

In today's volatile knowledge economy, an organisation's survival depends on its ability to retain committed and loyal staff (Lakshman *et al.*, 2022). Organisational commitment signifies the stable positive attachment that employees have towards their organisation (Saadeh & Suifan, 2020). This psychological attachment is shaped by the exchanges between the actors in the relationship, as per the SET. For this reason, there is a mutual psychological contract that guarantees employees will receive some tangible (sometimes intangible) value from the employer in return for the skills, knowledge, and time rendered (Chew, 2009). In this reciprocal process, employees commit their future to the organisation, giving their best effort to achieving organisational goals. In return, the organisation undertakes to provide for emotional and physical wellbeing through monetary rewards, job security, a favourable work environment, and job satisfaction. In this case, commitment is permanent and tenable when there is a balanced reciprocation between the employers and the employees (Awang *et al.*, 2016).

Efforts to examine the extent to which organisational commitment predicts turnover intent have been made by several scholars (Ahmad & Rainyee, 2014; Fardid *et al.*, 2018; Primasheila *et al.*, 2022). However, scholars have divergent views regarding the explanatory power of OC to explain TI. Some scholars have revealed that OC is negatively correlated with TI (Dayeh & Farmanesh, 2021; Parasız *et al.*, 2017; Serhan *et al.*, 2022). These scholars believe that as organisational commitment increases, there is less intent to leave. In a differing opinion, research by Aranki *et al.* (2019) and Faloye (2014) indicates that organisational commitment is positively and significantly related to turnover intentions. This school of thought argues that when organisational commitment improves, employees are more likely to harbour increased intent to quit (Chew & Chan, 2008). In a separate account, a few studies, like Tnay *et al.* (2013), show that OC does not influence withdrawal behaviour. These mixed and inconclusive results on the link between OC and TI call for more empirical studies to clarify the relationship in the Ugandan context. Based on these theoretical and empirical arguments, it leads us to hypothesise that:

H₁: Organisational commitment has a negative and significant effect on turnover intentions.

Self-efficacy and Turnover Intentions

Understanding how self-efficacy beliefs shape organisational outcomes still remains of interest for scholars and organisational managers. Drawing on the SCT, contemporary organisations could become more competitive when they are able to retain talent. With the support of efficacy beliefs, employees will be inclined to stay since they can create a conducive environment good for performance. Self-efficacy is appreciated for its importance in influencing job attitudes (Bandura, 2012). Highly efficacious individuals put in a lot of effort, love what they do, engage in organisational citizenship behaviours, are competent, and are less likely to switch organisational allegiance (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012; Soelton *et al.*, 2020) than the least efficacious employees. Indeed, low self-efficacy discourages employees from investing emotionally in the organisation. Attributed to low copying capacity due to limited skills, bad prior experiences, and weak physical states necessary to deal with stressful situations.

In the work context, highly efficacious employees have more freedom to exercise their judgment and decisions. (Ozyilmaz *et al.*, 2018). Because they are self-starters with clear goals and vision inspires them to adopt behaviours or actions that minimise failure (obstacles) but propel them to their goal. These beliefs will make employees energised, engaged, tenacious, and positive in their thinking, which elicits their commitment. Employees with a positive outlook, seek to maximize the benefits in the environment by staying. A large number of studies have shown that SE beliefs are related to turnover intentions (Albrecht & Marty, 2020; Chu *et al.*, 2022; Shahpouri *et al.*, 2016). From these previous studies and SCT, self-efficacy may be associated with turnover intentions, but these studies have their own limitations in the conceptualisation of self-efficacy. Besides, academic staff in Uganda were observed to have self-efficacy and high TI. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the self-efficacy levels of staff retention. Thus, we hypothesise that:

H₂ Self-efficacy has a negative influence on intentions to leave.

Moderating Role of Self-efficacy

From the social cognitive perspective (SCT), SE may possibly be considered as one of the contextual factors (Bandura, 1982; Nazir *et al.*, 2022) that influence choice and behaviour. The empirical literature considers SE as one of the important moderating variables that can facilitate or constrain an individual's action to stay or leave (Dicke *et al.*, 2018; Kosker, 2018; Otori *et al.*, 2018). According to SCT, an individual's decision (intention to stay or leave) is the result of the interaction between their beliefs and commitment shaped by organisational context (Bandura, 2001; Bandura, 2012). Self-efficacy as a personal characteristic enhances commitment, which affects the individual's wish to stay. In the perspective of universities, how well academic staff to discharge their roles, overcome challenges, balance work and life, and deal with stress depends on their efficacious outlook.

Accordingly, self-beliefs have a substantial influence on how individuals analyse, process, and respond to demanding situations based on their corresponding actions (Dicke *et al.*, 2018). In this case, SE does not produce a similar stimulation of personal attitudes and behavior when in trouble (Yu *et al.*, 2020). Specifically, highly efficacious staff tend to mobilise enough internal resources to overcome challenges, enabling them to build institutional attachment that improves their intention to stay (Mondo *et al.*, 2022; Nazir *et al.*, 2022; Selamat & Irsan, 2019). Thus, their confidence enables them to be persistent and persevere in adversity to reach their goal, thus reducing their intent to leave (Yu *et al.*, 2020). On the contrary, low-efficacious staff are likely to quit the organisation when they are overwhelmed by the work demands (Çelik *et al.*, 2016).

Thus, we anticipate that individuals with high SE who experience moments of giving up, are likely to form a strong attachment (determination) in order to reach their goal by engaging in behaviours related to intentions to stay (Çelik *et al.*, 2016; De Simone *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, for moderation to occur we expect SE to interact with OC and TI at the various levels of SE (Mondo *et al.*, 2022). Hence, we hypothesise that:

H₃: Self-efficacy moderates the relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions, where the relationship is stronger when self-efficacy is high.

Methodology

Research Design, Population, and Sampling

To validate our hypotheses, an explanatory research design using quantitative cross-sectional data was used. This design provides causal relationships between variables based on firsthand experience gained at a particular point in time (Kusemererwa *et al.*, 2020). Using Yamane's formula, a sample of 878 academic staff was drawn to represent 4,192. Accordingly, we followed a multi-stage sampling approach to arrive at the universities and academic staff that participated in the research. Under this approach, universities are first divided into private and public universities to facilitate selection. Secondly, simple random sampling allowed the researcher to identify the colleges, schools, and departments within each university for easy location of respondents. Finally, respondents who completed the survey were systematically selected from the staff lists (Simiyu *et al.*, 2019). The structured questionnaire was physically delivered by the research team to the targeted institutions. The study focused on academic staff as respondents on the assumption that they are better placed to provide more accurate and consistent data about the variables under study (Alkadash, 2020). To facilitate generalisation of findings, the researcher used SPSS 23 to run regression analysis, and PROCESS Macro (4.2), that is suitable for performing moderation effects following Aiken *et al.* (1991) conditions, was employed.

Measurement of Variables

This empirical study uses measurement items obtained from relevant literature (Andrews *et al.*, 2017). Concerning the dependent variable, the study adopted a 14-item survey associated with Jacobs and Roodt (2008) in measuring TI. This scale has an α of 0.91, observed as highly reliable. OC was operationalised on the original three dimensional scale with 19 items advanced by Meyer and Allen (1997). The reliability coefficient of this study is 0.88. Self-efficacy was measured using Bandura (2001) and Haddad and Taleb (2016)'s self-efficacy items of judgements of one's own physiological states; social persuasion; vicarious experience; and enactive mastery. This scale produced a α 0.81. In all, the measurement scales were anchored on a 7-point scale, with large data points essential for performing indirect effects (Anaam *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, gender, age, education, and academic rank were taken as control variables in the study.

Results

Respondent's Profile

Findings show that out of the initial 574 valid surveys, 367 were traced to males and 207 to females. Based on age distribution, the majority of the respondents—two hundred and fifty-four (260)—were aged 31–40 years; one hundred and ninety (193) faculty were within the 41–50-year cap; fifty-nine (60) respondents were in the 51–60 age group; fifty-four (54) academic staff were below 30 years; and only seven (7) were aged above 60 years. Considering the level of education, most respondents (55.6%) are master's graduates, 34.7% hold PhDs, and 9.8% are first-degree holders. Looking at rank, 74 respondents are Teaching assistants, 128 respondents serve as Assistant lecturers, 246 Lecturers, 78 Senior lecturers, 34 Assoc professors, and 14 are professors.

Descriptive and Correlation Analysis

Results in Table 1 provide the mean and standard deviation (SD) for organisational commitment, self-efficacy, and turnover intentions. All the constructs rated on a 7-point scale had a mean score above 4.5, indicating that the dataset is sampling error-free. Looking at the SD values gives an indication that the data was less skewed and close to the mean. Also, correlation results show that variables were negatively and significantly associated with organisational commitment and turnover intentions ($r = -.325^{**}$, $p = .01$) and self-efficacy and intentions to leave ($r = -.228^{**}$, $p = .01$). All correlations ranging at ($r < .8$) point to non-multicollinearity (Garson, 2012).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlation results

Variables	Mean	SD	TI	OC	SE
Turnover intentions (1)	4.966	1.164	1		
Organisational commitment (2)	5.171	1.058	-.325**	1	
Self-efficacy (3)	4.594	1.633	-.228**	.343**	1

N=574 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

The multiple regression was conducted on our data to isolate the unique contribution of controls, OC, and SE to the dependent variable at different levels, as indicated in Table 2. In Model 1, gender, age, education, and academic rank as control variables were entered.

Table 2: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

	Dependent Variable: Turnover intentions					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	Sig.	B	Sig.	β	Sig.
Gender	-.033	.434	-.039	.322	-.035	.369
Age	.102	.064	.119	.022	.103	.047
Education	-.081	.183	-.048	.408	-.035	.541
Rank	-.126	.056	-.146	.020	-.151	.015
OC			-.323	.000	-.279	.000
Self-efficacy					-.128	.002
R	.151		.355		.375	
R ²	.023		.126		.140	
R ² Change	.023		.103		.014	
F Change	3.325		67.177		9.402	
F	3.325		16.405		15.440	
Sig.	.010		.000		.002	

Notes; *** Significant at .001, OC = Organisational commitment, Dependent Variable: Turnover intentions

Source: Research Data (2022)

However, all controls were depicted as having no effect on turnover intentions in this sample. This model accounted for 2.3% variance in TI. In Model 2, organisational commitment was regressed ($\beta = -.32^{***}$), indicating that organisational commitment is a significant predictor of TI. This model accounts for 10.3% of the variance in TI, which led to acceptance of H₁. Thirdly, self-efficacy was introduced in Model 3 as per H₂. Results show that SE is a pathway to reducing TI ($\beta = -.13^{***}$). The model results, show that 1.4% variance in turnover intentions is accounted for by self-efficacy, thus supporting H₂.

Moderation Analysis

Finally, self-efficacy was introduced in this model in relation to interaction H₃. Hayes process macro v4.2 (Model 4) was used to test for moderation effects because of its ability to produce robust results (Hayes, 2018) using moderation conditions set by Aiken *et al.* (1991). Accordingly, the central focus of this study was achieved as the summary interaction results (Table 3), reveal that self-efficacy moderates the nexus between OC and TI (Coeff = -3.53, CI = -6.73, -.32). This model explains the 0.7% variance in turnover intentions. Based on these results, H₄ was supported. The overall study model posted a 14.7% variance in TI.

Table 3: Direct and Moderation Effects

Variable	Coeff	Se	t	p-v	LLCI	ULCI
Age	.022	.012	1.862	.063	-.001	.04
Gender	-.020	.016	-1.274	.203	-.051	.011
Education	-.010	.018	-.545	.586	-.044	.025
Rank	-.025	.010	-2.391	.017	-.045	-.004
OC	-.648	.107	-6.048	.000	-.858	-.438
SE	-.480	.149	-3.222	.001	-.772	-.187
Int_1(OC*SE)	-3.528	1.632	-2.162	.031	-6.732	-.323
R ²				.147		
ΔR ²				.007(4.676, p=**)		
F				13.998***		

Note: ***p < .001, OC = Organisational commitment, SE = Self-efficacy, Se = Standard Error of the Estimate, LLCI = Lower Limit Confidence Intervals, ULCI = Upper Limit Confidence Intervals.

The significant conditional effect of self-efficacy was further probed with the shape of the moderation graph suggested by Jose (2013) and Karama (2022). The graphical representation of the moderation relationship indicated that the association between OC and TI appeared strongest among academic staff who reported high levels of self-efficacy, such that higher organisational commitment was associated with significantly lower rates of TI. The correlation between OC and TI among academic staff who endorsed high levels of self-efficacy was higher, signifying that self-efficacy is likely to enhance turnover intentions.

The Mod-graph presented in Figure 1 shows that the simple slope lines are not parallel to each other, confirming the presence of a moderation effect. The upward-sloping shape of the lines from left to right implies that TI is lower at higher OC and SE. That implies at different levels of self-efficacy, the effect of OC on TI varies accordingly. Particularly, academic staff who score high on self-efficacy enhance the effect of OC on TI. Thus, Figure 1 is indicative that to address TI, OC, and SE, they should be strong.

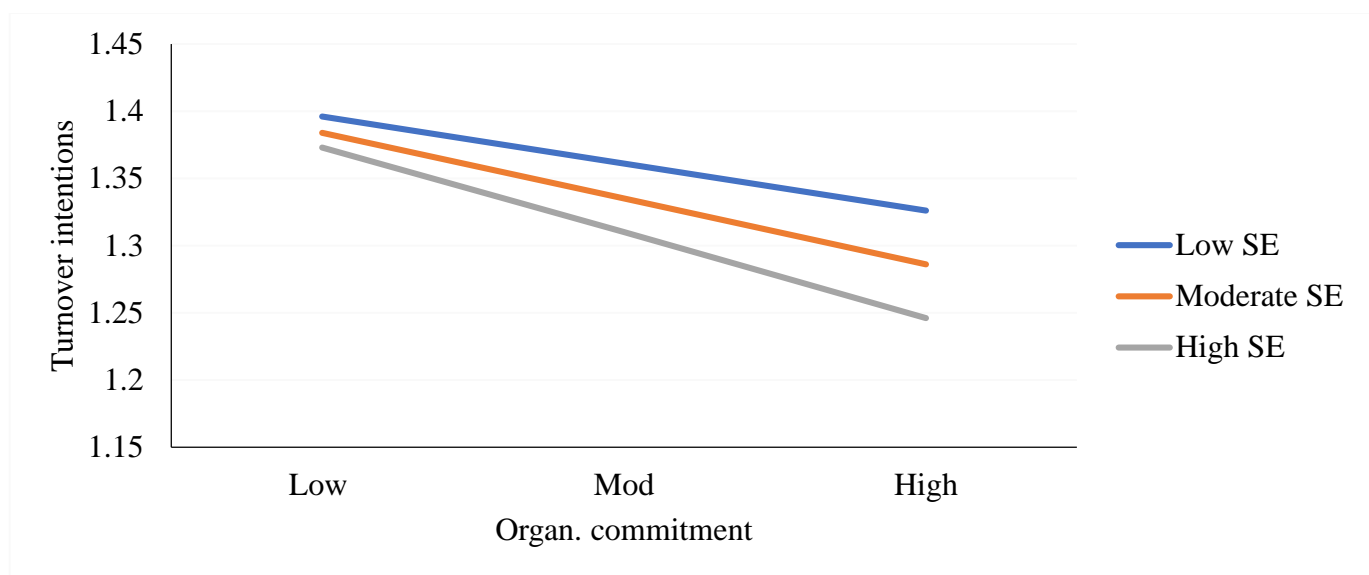


Figure 1: Self-efficacy moderates the link between organisational commitment and turnover intentions

Discussion

This study aimed to establish whether self-efficacy moderates the link between OC and TI. Specifically, our results confirm that organisational commitment and self-efficacy are significant enablers of staff retention in Ugandan universities. Overall, our core purpose of establishing the interaction effect of SE on OC and TI was detected. All control variables are insignificant in explaining turnover intentions. This implies that gender, age, education, and academic rank have minimal influence on the variables under study. In relation to hypothesis one (H1), results reveal that OC is the leading antecedent of TI. In the context of this study, results show that universities with academic staff who exhibit a strong sense of commitment to their institution have a lower turnover rate. This is evidenced when academic staff are time-bound in teaching, setting and marking exams, reducing customer complaints, working in teams, speaking well of the university, and engaging in extra-role activities that are not paid for. In all, committed staff exhibit affective (identify with goals and objectives), normative (exhibit gratitude and loyalty), and continuance (stay due to perceived costs of leaving) commitment. As such, OC is of predictive value to institutions striving to retain a more stable, loyal, engaged, and high-performing staff.

This result is similar to Aggarwal *et al.* (2022); Chan and Ao (2019); Nazir *et al.* (2016); Pratama *et al.* (2022); and Zeidan (2021), who assert that high organisational commitment reduces turnover intentions. Thus, universities operating in today's highly dynamic environment can guarantee their long-term prosperity by ensuring that employees exhibit high levels of commitment. Committed staff devote time to organisational activities and engage in extra roles for the benefit of the university at no extra cost. Further, this finding aligns with the SET, which postulates that individuals engage in social relationships based on the expectation of mutual benefits and the desire to minimise costs. Considering the present empirical evidence, lecturers develop a sense of attachment and loyalty to their university when they perceive that the university fulfils their needs and provides them with positive outcomes.

In response to hypothesis two (H₂), self-efficacy has a significantly negative effect on TI. This result means that when academic staff display a high spirit of SE, they have confidence in their skills, knowledge, and capabilities to effectively handle their work responsibilities and challenges. In particular, these academic staff set challenging goals and persist in their efforts to achieve them and succeed in their careers. This drive and determination

contribute to superior accomplishment and fulfilment in the professional sphere and curtail the desire to seek out new job opportunities. Such individuals stay because they have a lot to lose should they decide to quit.

This finding concurs with Afzal *et al.* (2019); De Simone *et al.* (2018); and Shahpouri *et al.* (2016), which found that high self-efficacy leads to a greater sense of pleasure, meaning, and commitment at work, which reduces the desire to leave current positions. This finding concurs with social cognitive theory, which suggests that people learn from observations and develop their self-efficacy. Therefore, lowly confident academic staff who benchmark highly confident staff or mentors' approach to challenging tasks through guided learning enables them to improve their self-efficacy. During guided task execution, one gains valuable experiences and insights that enable one to master and embrace certain activities as opposed to viewing them as threats to be avoided at all costs. Thus, such copying strategies enable them to persevere and extend their stay at the university with the aim of being successful.

In line with hypothesis 3 (H₃), findings regarding the interaction point to the presence of a synergetic link between OC and SE on TI. Going by the interaction results, a decrease in OC and SE triggers an increase in TI. This implies that even when academic staff exhibit high levels of organisational commitment, if their self-efficacy is low, the commitment may have less influence in reducing their TI. In this sense, self-efficacy acts as a protective factor or buffer that mitigates the impact of OC on TI. When academic staff possess echelons of SE, it counteracts the negative influences of low organisational commitment and reduces their likelihood to quit.

Our findings confirm those of Obeng *et al.* (2021), who observed that self-efficacy moderated between OC and TI. In another context, Otori *et al.* (2018) revealed that self-efficacy moderated the correlation between job satisfaction and TI in Nigeria. Van Waeyenberg *et al.* (2015) pointed out that the relationship between giving feedback and TI was conditional on self-efficacy. Overall, universities can design interventions and programmes that focus on building self-efficacy beliefs among academic staff. This could involve mentoring, coaching, and feedback mechanisms that reinforce their confidence and abilities in their roles. By strengthening self-efficacy, universities can promote higher levels of OC and lower TI among academic staff. In sum, the interaction coefficient validates the study model that the organisational commitment effect on turnover intention is contingent upon the spirit of self-efficacy. To it simply, academic staff will be less likely to quit their university as long as their OC increase is matched by an increase in their personal beliefs.

Conclusion

Overall, the results revealed a negative and significant direct effect of OC on TI. Similarly, SE has a direct and significant effect on TI, while self-efficacy has a conditional moderating effect on the nexus between OC and TI. Based on the confirmed results of the hypotheses, an appropriate model was created that combines theory and practice. The results add to the literature, support the role of self-efficacy as a moderator in the model of OC and TI, and provide tentative solutions for further developing organisational strategies to prevent future turnover behaviour while promoting OC.

The conditional effect of SE on the relationship between OC and TI has been demonstrated in Ugandan universities, providing practitioners and academicians in other contexts with a useful theoretical model for TI to develop by adding a more robust and comprehensive model: additional predictors of TI not integrated into the model. The results of the model show that turnover intention can be facilitated by organisational commitment and self-efficacy, supporting the views of SCT and SET.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study enhances our understanding of TI in university settings in an emerging economy. The social exchange theory contributes to our understanding that academic staff engage in relationships and interactions based on the principle of reciprocity. In the context of OC and TI, academic staff who receive and experience positive effects, benefits, or resources in the course of employment are obliged to reciprocate by eliciting a high sense of commitment. In return, this commitment leads to increased loyalty and decreased TI. Further, these research findings present evidence of the relevance of SCT in reducing TI. SCT highlights that self-efficacy beliefs are key catalysts in individuals' behaviour and decision-making. In terms of turnover intentions, academicians with a high self-efficacy spirit have the confidence and belief in their ability to overcome challenges and succeed in their roles. As a result, academic staff with higher self-efficacy are less likely to develop TI. Therefore, our paper contributes to knowledge in employment management, specifically on how to stimulate talent retention within Ugandan universities.

Practical Implications

Relating this research to practice, the results suggest that OC can help inhibit employee TI. University administrators ought to reconsider adopting embedded human resource practices and policies that enhance staff retention. These practices and policies are important signals and sources of social information that the university itself values its employees and their stay. To promote retention, universities may prioritise recognising and rewarding excellent performance and behaviour, equity, inclusiveness, diversity, training and development, open communication, and a supportive work culture focused on commitment to social values. Indeed, these practices and policies will encourage staff to extend their stay due to the fear of losing benefits associated with such a work environment. Hence, regular administration of OC surveys could prove meaningful in assessing whether implemented policies and initiatives are sustainable and tenable.

Considering that lecturers' sense of self-belief is related to lower levels of TI, this provides an avenue for universities to reconsider SE as an important trait in the appointment of academic staff. Specifically, universities need to set explicit measures by which academic staff with strong capability credentials could be selected. As discussed, prospective candidates should demonstrate the ability to withstand adversity, self-regulate, be self-motivated, innovate, and take personal initiative by being proactive in promoting institutional goals. The current findings suggest that an assessment of an employee's self-efficacy through interviews, assessment tests, and reference checks contributes to hiring individuals who have a strong belief in their abilities and skills, which increases their commitment and lowers TI as they are more confident to succeed by turning work challenges into opportunities.

Finally, the incumbent academic staff whose SE is either low or completely non-existent, customised training and development programmes, mentorship, continuous feedback, and open communication should be encouraged by university administrators aimed at sensitising them about the strategic imperative of confidence in a contemporary globalised society. Through such initiatives, academic staff will be convinced to embrace beliefs that support commitment and reduce TI. With a confident mindset towards the university, academic staff gradually become more attached to and support university programmes.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Like other empirical studies, this research is hampered by some limitations. Firstly, the survey was conducted over three months, making it cross-sectional. Although cross-sectional studies provide a large amount of data in the shortest time and at a low cost, they do not provide random associations or changes between variables over time. Further still, the study also focused on personal perceptions, which are easily prone to social

desirability and cannot be completely ruled out, even when attempts to control them are made. Therefore, further future tracer studies covering pre- and post-TI are recommended to confirm the current findings, as this could overcome issues related to individual perception. Secondly, the hypothesised model accounted for 14.7% of the variance in TI. This reveals that the study did not consider other factors that explain 85.3% of the variance in TI. Thus, future research could investigate these factors in other contexts for generalisability. Thirdly, this study was based on self-reported quantitative data, which limits the researcher's ability to capture contextual factors and specific individual experiences that may influence the variables. Replication of this study using mixed methods with multiple stakeholders (academic, administrative, and support staff) across the state- and privately-owned institutes would allow for a more comprehensive exploration of the variables under study, thus creating a broader understanding of the experiences and perceptions of all staff in Ugandan universities.

Funding: Our research never received any external funding.

Acknowledgments: The authors acknowledge the administrative support from the management of universities and their academic staff during the data collection exercise.

Data Availability Statement: The participants of this study did not provide written consent for their data to be used publicly due to the sensitive nature of the research; therefore, supporting data is not available.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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