Investigating Organizational Commitment as a Turnover Intention Mitigation Tool: Are Dimensions of Organizational Commitment Important?

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore whether the relationship between academic staff turnover intention and organizational commitment is influenced by organizational commitment dimensions. The study employed a cross-sectional research approach to analyze quantitative data at an individual level. Information on the research variables was gathered from 878 academic staff members at 8 Ugandan universities via a survey questionnaire. SPSS version 25 was employed in the analysis to evaluate the suggested model. The results of empirical research show that the intention to depart is significantly and negatively impacted by organizational commitment. It is notable that both the affective and normative commitment dimensions exhibit a significant decrease in turnover intention. The findings also support the idea that there is no statistical relationship between the intention to leave voluntarily and continuously. Previous research on the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention has concentrated on how organizational commitment affects turnover intention across various domains. The individual contribution of organizational commitment dimensions in predicting turnover intention in the education domain has been scarce. Our study aims to close the gap by illuminating the predictive role of affective, normative, and continuance commitment as a measure of staff retention in higher education institutions in emerging economy.

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Introduction

Researchers and educationists are perplexed as to how to end the knowledge worker turnover that continues to be so high even after higher education institutions (HEIs) have implemented a variety of organizational-wide interventions (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008; Srirangam Ramaprasad *et al.,* 2018). Specifically, as Uganda envisages a vibrant and mid-income economy by 2040, HEIs are a strong pillar in this national transformational agenda (Abate, 2021). With this, university education is being popularized and made accessible to all citizens. To bring the education service closer, the government has decentralized public universities to regional levels while liberalizing the economy to allow more private actors in education (Mugabi, 2012). Such developments have resulted in unprecedented demand for highly proficient academic staff, supporting an increasing number of universities and students (Dube & Ndofirepi, 2023). Additionally, this demand has exerted tremendous pressure on Ugandan HEIs to retain academicians with vast knowledge, competence, and experience to augment teaching, research (innovation), and community engagement (Tumusiime, 2022). Coincidentally, HEIs are at war for talent to retain highly performing faculty, which is key to creating a difference in organizational performance outcomes (Gerhardt & Karsan, 2022) and competitive advantage. As a result, HEIs need to deal with turnover intentions and their related effects, which threaten their mandate to provide quality education.

This makes turnover issues a vital consideration for HEIs. Recent statistics indicate that turnover is a concern within Ugandan HEIs. For instance, Rwendeire (2017) reported that some academic units at Makerere University operate at 40% of the required headcount. Further, between 2010 and 2015, HEIs had several quits, with 68 academic staff resigning from Makerere University, Kyambogo University (38), Mbarara University of Science and Technology (26), Gulu University (26), Kampala International University (26), and Ndejje University (17) (Tumwesigye *et al.*, 2020). This loss of senior academic staff has a far-reaching impact on education quality, a severe drop in the international rankings of universities, financial status, and university prestige (Mwesigwa *et al.*, 2020). With this mass exodus and pending exit of academicians; the universities' input to the realization of the national vision 2040 will be curtailed, and their reputation will most likely decline (Ssali *et al.*, 2019). This calls for universities to understand the antecedents of turnover intention to accelerate staff retention (An, 2019). Given the incessant negative effect of turnover intention, it highlights the need for sustainable staff retention in HEIs to be addressed (Kim & Kim, 2021). From the literature have emerged tremendous theories and HR practices that could help accelerate staff retention in HEIs (Srirangam Ramaprasad *et al.*, 2018). HR scholars, including Hom *et al.* (2017) and Maryam *et al.* (2021), advocate developing a strong organizational commitment for improved staff retention. However, the present literature shows quite a limited understanding of this subject matter, especially in Ugandan settings. Organizational commitment can be viewed as a philosophy that drives the employment-related decision-making process of staff. Commitment encompasses one's psychological attachment and consideration of wanting, needing, or feeling to retain organizational membership over time (Inam *et al.*, 2023; Park & Pierce, 2020). For HEIs to serve the public interest better, commitment instils a sense of improved energy, service, enthusiasm, attendance, and persistence (Sukirman *et al.*, 2024).

Drawing on the social exchange theory, organizational commitment is employed as an outcome construct since lecturers' behavior (to stay or quit) in an organization is a response to the treatment from the organizational agents (Byrne *et al.*, 2011; Ennis *et al.*, 2018; Pariyanti *et al.*, 2023). According to this perspective, when academic staff feel that their commitment is not well reciprocated by the organization, they consider living with the organization the immediate alternative. However, it remains unclear whether organizational commitment or its dimensions can affect turnover intention in the present context. Although organizational commitment has considerably garnered interest from scholars in the past owing to its association with turnover intention, there are research gaps that must be filled. First, the majority of the studies have predominantly focused on the western jurisdiction, ignoring developing nations like Uganda (Obedgiu *et al.*,

2017; Opolot *et al.*, 2023b). This creates a deficit to be investigated. Second, although considerable empirical research examining turnover intention antecedents exists, higher education seems to be excluded from these reviews (Opolot *et al.*, 2023a). This omission limits our comprehension of elements that influence staff turnover decisions, which inherently manifest in different intensities across types of jobs and industries (Holtom *et al.*, 2008). Third, existing studies have considered organizational commitment as a single (unidimensional) general construct (Park & Min, 2020). Incidentally, limited research in the realm of educational organizations has positioned the facets of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) as individual antecedents to turnover intention (Ramalho Luz *et al.*, 2018). Lastly, studies that have attempted to examine the multidimensional nature of organizational commitment have only inclined to a short version or only one dimension as affective commitment (Forner *et al.*, 2024; Park & Min, 2020). Therefore, it's possible that these results can't be fully applied to normative and continuance commitments (Nangoli *et al.,* 2020; Wang *et al.,* 2022). This significantly impairs our comprehension of how these individual dimensions predict turnover intention. Therefore, by embracing each of these characteristics in its whole and highlighting how they interact, the relationship between these factors is made even more evident (Sarisik *et al.,* 2019).

Al Balushi *et al.* (2022), Aji *et al.* (2017), and Ozkan *et al.* (2020) asserted for more research into how organizational commitment can be used to accelerate staff retention. Due to the paucity of research on the impact of organizational commitment on turnover intention, theoretically driven studies linking organizational commitment sub-constructs to turnover intentions in the education sector are still warranted. Addressing these highlighted gaps, this study offers a valuable understanding of "whether" organizational commitment or its dimensions influence turnover intention. Hence, this paper focuses on empirically reviewing four research questions. First, does organizational commitment explain turnover intentions? Second, what is the effect of affective commitment on turnover intention? Third, how does normative commitment account for differences in turnover intention? Finally, what is continuance commitment's predictive role in staff turnover intention? To answer these questions, a quantitative approach targeting HEIs with a high prevalence of turnover intention with academic staff as respondents was employed. Accordingly, the empirical evidence of our analysis is intended to produce reliable scholarly and practical implications. First, this paper addresses calls to integrate different forms of organizational commitment within the same study. By examining these causal relationships, we shall be able to isolate the varying influence of each component of organizational commitment on staff relationships with the organization. Second, the study illuminates new evidence in a seemingly ignored area in an emerging context like Uganda, as opposed to the developed world. Finally, we use HEIs as a testing arena since organizational commitment has been observed to be context-specific (Aji *et al.*, 2017). This paper is ordered in sections as follows: The subsequent section analyzes the study's theoretical underpinnings together with the proposed hypotheses. This is followed by the methodology, analysis, and presentation of the findings. After the findings are discussed, implications, limitations, and future research areas are presented.

Literature Review

Theoretical underpinning

Turnover intention is a practical reaction to organizational commitment, as seen from a theoretical perspective. The degree of an individual's affective, normative, and continuance commitment may influence their decision to stay or depart the organization (Cherif, 2020; Rawashdeh *et al.,* 2022). Such an ontological perspective is consistent with the main goal of our research, which is to investigate turnover intention among academic staff from the perspective of social exchange theory and to quantitatively analyze the relationship between turnover intention and organizational commitment. Social exchange theory (SET) states that participants in the exchange process engage in actions that are advantageous in nature (Blau, 1964). As such,

actors ought to give and receive something in exchange and vice versa for this relationship to flourish (Blau, 2017; Salvador *et al.,* 2022). To this extent, it is implied that employees offer time, effort, accountability, knowledge, and loyalty to organizations to represent the essence of social exchange. In return, organizations strengthen the ties by providing job security, career development, flexible work arrangements, institutional support, and pro-employee HR policies (Salvador *et al.,* 2022). This denotes that such a relationship is reciprocal in nature. Thus, in the context of our study, universities will benefit from increased organizational commitment (when staff work hard, take on extra roles, speak well of the institution, align with goals), and extend stay when they perceive that their investments are cared for, valued, and reciprocated through salary, institutional support, a favorable work environment, respect, and job security (Ahmad Saufi *et al.,* 2023). Therefore, SET explains that organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) is relevant in fostering staff stay decisions amongst Ugandan academicians.

Organizational commitment and turnover intention

Scholars and analysts contend that developing a sustainable staff retention strategy requires organizational commitment (Ennis *et al.,* 2018). Today, organizational commitment is popular as enterprises search for success and competitive advantage through a committed team of employees (Aggarwal *et al.,* 2022; Machokoto, 2019). Previous research has demonstrated that committed employees are less likely to become engrossed in withdrawal intentions and are more receptive to change (Ennis *et al.,* 2018; Xu *et al.,* 2022). Guided by the SET, organizational commitment is a response to the exchange between employees and their employers (Harden *et al.,* 2018; Yao *et al.,* 2019) and comprises three elements (affective, normative, and continuance). Positive exchanges create committed staff who stay by choice (affective commitment), a sense of obligation (normative commitment), and perceived costs of leaving (continuance commitment) the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Normative commitment tends to result in a "compliance mindset" where academic staff prioritize adherence to regulations rather than actively pursuing career change intentions (Rasche & Esser, 2020). Allen and Meyer (1990) and Ramalho Luz *et al.* (2018) suggest that the effects of normative commitment may lead employees to focus on shorter-term compliance to pressures (staying to pay debts) that align with the objectives and interests of the organization rather than the ones that come from affective commitment, resulting in a passive approach to staying. Organisational commitment has garnered a lot of attention as a means of promoting staff retention; yet, due to cultural and contextual differences between developed and developing countries, a large portion of research on this topic has been disguised (Aube *et al.,* 2007). Hence, we posit in H1 that *a high level of organizational commitment is likely to reduce turnover intention.*

Affective commitment and turnover intention

Affective commitment is the most studied component as an antecedent and has a strong correlation with a number of organizational and individual outcomes, such as intention to leave (Gyensare *et al.,* 2016). According to Ennis *et al.* (2018), affective commitment is seen as a consistent and dependable factor that encourages workers to identify with and value organizational membership. Affective commitment, as endorsed by Meyer *et al.* (2002) and Mercurio (2015), is the fundamental component of commitment that is associated with the favorable disposition that workers have towards their company (Stazyk *et al.,* 2011). Employees with a strong affective bond spend more time at work, don't disrupt and delay service delivery, have more connection to the organizational long-term vision and goals, go beyond job requirements, collaborate with colleagues, and ultimately prefer to extend their organizational stay (Goetz & Wald, 2022). Allen and Meyer (1990) supported these findings by showing that affectively committed staff tend to remain with an employer willingly by choice. Similarly, Perryer *et al.* (2010) concluded that employees form affective commitment by sharing common values within the organization, transmitting emotional attachment to work, kinship, and lasting emotional capital to the organization that fosters employee loyalty and stay (Gratton,

2000). Thus, the degree to which academic staff decide to stay or leave depends to a greater extent on their affective commitment. Although affective commitment was expected to be a strong predictor of turnover intention in these studies, there have been contradictory results regarding this relationship. For instance, Ennis *et al.* (2018) found that, in contrast to normative commitment, affective commitment was a poor predictor of turnover intention. In addition, Ahmad (2018) proved that an employee's choice to remain did not depend on how emotionally attached they felt to the company. Affective commitment has also not been widely employed in research to directly predict turnover intention in both public and private settings (Ennis et al., 2018). Thus, our research addresses the recent requests for investigations into the relationship between affective commitment and the intention to leave rare academic settings. Therefore, we advance H2 which hypothesizes that *a high level of affective commitment is likely to reduce turnover intention.*

Normative commitment and turnover intention

There is a fictitious consensus in a number of sectors regarding the relationship between normative commitment and turnover intention (Ennis *et al.,* 2018). Employees are encouraged to accept and adopt specific behaviors and standards in the literature on social exchange as a way to respond to the demands of the work relationship (Harden *et al.,* 2018). In the context of our study, academic staff comply with social pressures from universities in order to enjoy the benefits of staying (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). If employees fail to adhere to these social obligations, they will encounter feelings of guilt, self-consciousness, anxiety, and obsession when contemplating leaving the organization (Triguero-Sánchez *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, normative commitment inherently generates a moral standard that persuades employees to stay faithful to their organizations, and the potency of this moral standard is contingent upon the degree of trust and investments made out of social exchanges (Jabutay & Rungruang, 2021). Employees with a high sense of normative pressure tend to reluctantly act in contradiction to the potential ethical standards within the establishment. They proactively work to circumvent the ethical risks tied to leaving the institution, which can disrupt the social exchange endeavors within the institution and its staff (Avanzi *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, the credibility of exchanges and trust improve contractual obligations and expectations between stakeholders to a great extent, thereby enhancing interaction efficacy (normative commitment) while lowering future exit plans (Pariyanti *et al.*, 2022). However, due to the liberalisation of the education sector, cultural expectations and obligations, a lack of opportunities for career advancement, and financial constraints; the influence of normative commitment on turnover intention in the Ugandan education context is minimal (Suliman & Iles, 2000; Vandenberghe *et al.,* 2015). Further to the above, Solinger *et al.* (2008) recommended the abolition of normative commitment due to high inconsistencies and variance in results when compared to other commitment elements. Thus, we arrive at the hypothesis H3 that a *high level of normative commitment is likely to reduce turnover intention.*

Continuance commitment and turnover intention

Continuance commitment is the last and less common but equally viable dimension that has been linked to turnover intention, as claimed by Devece *et al.* (2016), Faloye (2014), and Wang *et al.* (2022). Specifically, Wang *et al.* (2022) point out that employees with high continuance commitments stay to prevent estimated potential losses. Following the SET principle, people maintain organizational membership as a perquisite to enjoy the benefits of their investments while minimizing losses if they decide to quit. Faloye (2014) observed a significant impact of the continuance-dimensional factor on the desire to alter employment by paramilitary teams in Nigeria. Similarly, in a public Australian utility firm, Perryer *et al.* (2010) documented an inverse relationship between continuance commitment and the intention to quit the firm. To promote continued commitment among academic staff, universities must reciprocate by providing salaries, pensions, health and medical insurance, and a decent work environment as safeguards for turnover intentions (Yao *et al.*, 2019). From the empirical and theoretical bases, we argue that once academic staff are trapped by

continuance commitment, they exhibit loyalty and persistence to preserve affiliation. Briefly, employees with low continuance commitment give rise to negative feelings of turnover intention as compensation for the loss of investments. Nevertheless, the crucial role of continuance commitment in turnover intention research remains overlooked (Nandi *et al.*, 2020). On this basis, we seek to contribute to limited studies by exploring how and why continuance commitment impacts critical job-related outcomes, like turnover intention, in an emerging environment. We can thus hypothesize in H4 that a *high level of continuance commitment is likely to reduce turnover intention.*

Research Model

We suggest that institutions with greater organizational commitment have a lower likelihood of experiencing increased turnover intention based on the aforementioned hypotheses. We specifically look at the relationship between turnover intention and three different forms of organizational commitment: continuance, normative, and affective. As seen in *Figure 1,* this broadens our understanding of the various organizational commitments.
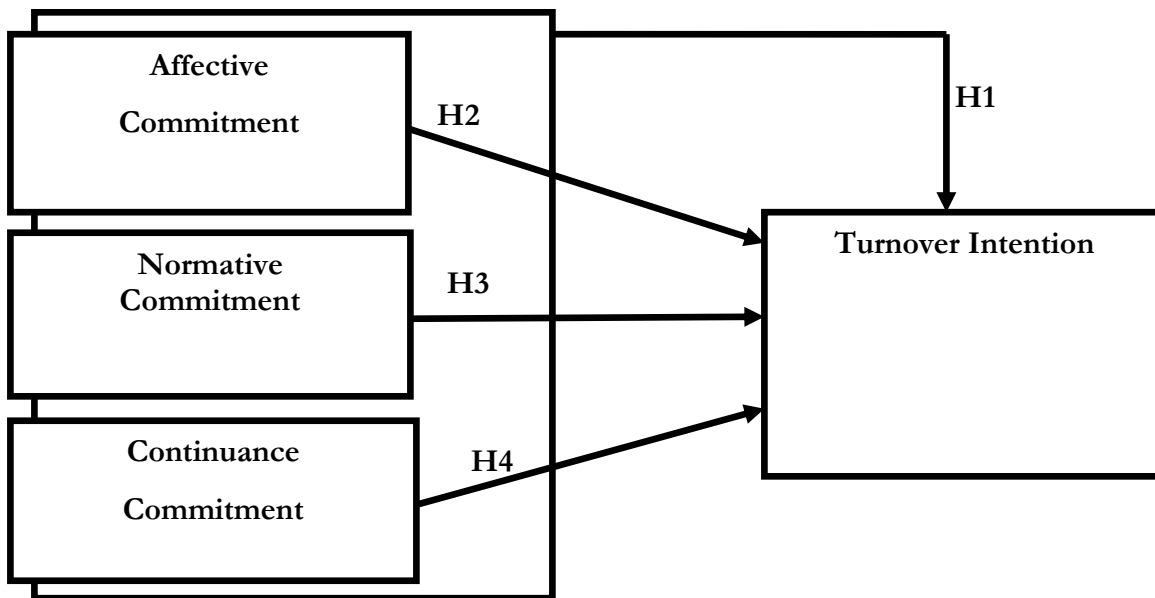
Figure 1: Hypothesised Research Model

Methodology

Our study used a cross-sectional survey design in accordance with the objectives. We chose this design in order to increase the validity and generalizability of the results by gathering a sizable dataset on the proposed correlations in one snapshot.

HEIs formed the population frame from which 878 academic employees were chosen from eight Ugandan universities to provide information in support of the research objectives. Using information from the ministry of education and university records, stratified random sampling was used to choose the academic staff in the first phase in proportion to the population in each stratum (kind of university). By dividing the entire population by the sample size and using the available list of academic staff, a Kth number (4.8, roughly equivalent to 5) is derived. This "Kth" number was then used to choose staff members at intervals (1st, 3rd, 5th, and so on). When a staff member was chosen, their department was located on the list, and the survey instrument was then sent to the respondents. To collect data, a cover letter detailing the study purpose,

research ethical committee approval from TASO-REC, a sample consent form, and a closed-ended questionnaire were sent to the responsible university accounting officers. To speed up data collection at the various sites, a liaison person was identified to make follow-ups and ensure the questionnaires were filled out appropriately and returned. The researcher made weekly calls to the liaison officer to establish the progress of the data due to the respondents' busy schedules. This ensured that 578 usable questionnaires were obtained, producing a 65% response rate. Given the data collection period and nature of the respondents, this response rate is acceptable for generalizing findings to the study population.

To obtain comparable results, the variable measurement items were adapted and modified from existing works, with responses being anchored on a seven-point Linkert scale arranged from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). A seven-rank scale is ideal for offering sufficient data points that are reliable for analysis (Anaam *et al.*, 2020). The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), which was adapted and modified from Meyer and Allen (1997), was used to measure organizational commitment. The OCQ is a set of 19 items that assesses three types of commitment: normative (6 items), continuance (6 items), and affective (7 items). Turnover intention was assessed using Roodt and Jacobs (2008) items. These items were found to be appropriate for their intended use after undergoing validity and reliability testing prior to launch. Organizational Commitment (.881) normative (.709), continuance (.786), and affective (.727). TI (.909).

In *Table 1,* results indicate that our sample was male dominated (63.9%), while 36.1% were female. This result aligns with Lee *et al.* (2017), who linked it to the competitive nature job environment that encourages male to regularly change jobs in order to meet the family and career progression demands. In terms of age, 45.3% of respondents were aged between 31 and 40, while those above 60 years formed the least age group with 1.2%. This implies that the majority of the academic staff in the sampled universities are in their thirties, and this category of staff is more prone to turnover due to their desire to explore and experience new job challenges (Peltokorpi *et al.*, 2015). In all, our study has captured and generalized the sample perceptions of all the various age groups within universities.

Table 1: Profile of respondents

Measure	Attribute	Number of respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	367	63.9
	Female	206	36.1
	Total	574	100.0
Age	Below 30 years	54	9.4
	31-40 years	260	45.3
	41-50 years	193	33.6
	51-60 years	60	10.5
	Above 60 years	7	1.2
	Total	**574**	**100.0**

Source: Primary data

Correlations results

The bivariate Pearson's correlation analysis was used to establish the association between organizational commitment, affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment, and turnover intention. The coefficient values in *Table 2* indicate that "organizational commitment" is negatively correlated with turnover intention (-.325**). In terms of dimensions, affective commitment is negatively and significantly correlated with turnover intentions" (-.428**), normative commitment (-.316**) is negatively correlated with turnover intentions", and continuance negatively correlated with "turnover intention" (-0.073). Furthermore, affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment are positively and significantly correlated to "turnover intention," with scores of (.678**, .694**, and .485**)

respectively. Likewise, normative commitment (.620**) and continuance commitment (.288**) are positively and significantly correlated with affective commitment. Finally, continuance commitment is significantly correlated with normative commitment (.476**). Given the statistically significant results, it proves that the study data conformed to parametric assumptions of linearity with a strong predictive power of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Besides, the moderate strength of the correlation coefficients < .8 is indicative of non-multicollinearity. In addition, multi-collinearity was tested using the VIF value of 1.325 < .5 and Tolerance value of .755 < 2, which are both within the threshold, suggesting there is no multicollinearity problem.

Table 2: Correlations results

	TI	OC	ACT	NCT	CCT
Turnover intention	1.000				
Organizational commitment	-.325**	1.000			
Affective commitment	-.428**	.678**	1.000		
Normative commitment	-.316**	.694**	.620**	1.000	
Continuance commitment	-.073	.485**	.288**	.476**	1.000
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Source: Primary data

Effect size

Effect size, is a quantitative measure of the strength of a phenomenon, that either emphasizes the size of the difference between groups or the relationship between two variables (Becker, 2000; Huberty, 2002). Effect size is important in research as it indicate the practical significance of the results, not just the statistical significance (Sullivan & Feinn, 2012). Nakagawa and Cuthill (2007) explain that effect size quantifies the size of experimental effects and helps researchers understand the practical importance of their findings. To enhance the quality of a study, adequate estimates of effect size was reported (Lakens, 2013), taking into account both the statistical and practical significance of the findings (LeCroy & Krysik, 2007). Limited statistical power may be the cause of a large P-value, and a modest P-value does not always imply a meaningful practical effect (Sullivan, 2012).

The reporting of impact size is therefore crucial in all investigations, irrespective of their statistical significance (Thompson, 2007; Lakens, 2013). Mean difference between groups and degree of link between variables are the two basic categories into which effect size estimates are separated (Sun et al., 2010). Based on the standardised group mean difference, Cohen's d, Glass's Δ, and Hedges's g determine the mean difference effect sizes. The correlation between two variables is measured by the r^2 value, which indicates the percentage of variance explained. The intensity and direction of the association between two variables are measured by the Pearson correlation coefficient, or "r." Perfect negative correlation is represented by a value of -1, and perfect positive correlation is represented by a value of +1, which was adopted by the study to explain the effect size. Based on the observed values fall within medium and larger since the r values were within the range of .316 to .694. The only exception was for link between continuance commitment and turnover intention with a value of -.073 is minor. Therefore, the effect size for the study is considered minor, medium and larger since observed values were near +1 or -1 suggest a larger effect magnitude (Bhandari, 2022), following Cohen's rule of thumb of effect size.

Results and Discussion

The study used a hierarchical regression model to test the outcomes of the hypotheses, as shown in Table 3. In all the analyses, control variables were included. However, they were both found to be

insignificant, as indicated by $p > 0.05$ from Mode 1 to Model 5. In Model 1 of Table 3, findings reveal that both the control variables account for 0.2% of the variance in turnover intentions, as shown by $R^2 = 0.002$, F = 0.445, insignificant at $p > .05$. Results of Model 2 indicate that the global organizational commitment (OC) variable significantly but negatively influences turnover intention, as shown by $\beta = -.818$, $p = 0.000$. The Table further indicates that all the variables in this Model 2 explain 10.7% of the variations in turnover intention, as shown by $R^2 = .107$, F = 67.343, which was significant at $p = 0.000$. In addition, the model reveals a change in R^2 of 0.105, an indication that, while holding constant control variables, OC accounts for 10.5% of the variance in turnover intentions. These results support H1. Model 3 of the same table was meant to test the influence of affective commitment (AC) while holding constant both the control variables and the global organizational commitment. Results indicate that AC significantly but negatively influences turnover intention, as shown by $\beta = -.105$, $p = 0.000$. The outcome further shows an improved $R2 = .184$ and a change in $R2$ of 0.077, F = 53.830, $p = 0.000$. This implies that all the variables in the model explain 18.4% of the variance in turnover intentions, and the change in $R2$ of 0.077 reveals that affective commitment alone contributes 7.7% of the variation in turnover intentions. Based on the above results, H2 is also supported by the study.

Hypothesis H3 was tested in Model 4 of the same table. Findings show that normative commitment (NC) was found to have a negative but significant influence on turnover intention ($\beta = -.032$, $p = 0.003$). In addition, results show an R^2 of .197, $\Delta R^2 = .013$, F = 9.042, $p < 0.05$. This implies that all the variables in the model account for 19.7% of the variations in turnover intention, while the normative commitment independently explains 1.3% of the variations in turnover intention. These findings support hypothesis H3. The commitment dimension (CC) was tested in Model 5. This was meant to test hypothesis H4 while holding all the other variables constant. Results indicate that continuance commitment (CC) had a non-significant effect on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.004$; $p > 0.05$) with an unchanged $R2$ of 0.197 and an insignificant F = .159 as shown by $p > .05$. This finding indicates that hypothesis H4 is not supported by the current study. Overall, this model, which includes both the organizational commitment global variable and its sub-dimensions, predicts a 19.7% variance in turnover intention outcome.

Table 3: Regression results

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
Variable	**B**	***Sig.***	**B**	***Sig.***	**β**	***Sig.***	**B**	***Sig.***	**B**	***Sig.***
Gender	-.012	.460	-.014	.359	-.007	.665	-.005	.760	-.005	.760
Age	-.006	.556	.000	.975	.000	.989	.001	.901	.001	.896
OC			-.818	.000	.118	.458	.545	.011	.442	.185
AC					-.105	.000	-.109	.000	-.104	.000
NC							-.032	.003	-.031	.006
CC									.004	.696
F Change	.445		67.343***		53.830***		9.042**		.159	
R^2	.002		.107		.184		.197		.197	
ΔR^2	.002		.105		.077		.013		.000	

Notes: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. *Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention*

This study's hypothesized model, which is based on social exchange theory, emphasizes the significance of organizational commitments in staff retention. First, the study discovered a negative correlation between the latent variable of organizational commitment and the intention to turnover at HEIs in Uganda. This suggests that academic institutions with staff members who have a strong organizational commitment are less likely to have turnover aspirations. As a result, HEIs stand to gain from enhanced personnel availability (limited time), upholding corporate reputation, serving as brand representatives, and providing high-quality service. The study's findings are consistent with those of Al Balushi *et al.* (2022); Jano *et*

al. (2019); Rawashdeh and Tamimi (2020); Ramalho Luz *et al.* (2018); Serhan *et al.* (2022); and Tran *et al.* (2020), who discovered that the three components of organizational commitment are significantly related to turnover intention. In other words, the more committed the academic staff feel, the less likely they are to trigger an intention to leave the university (Park *et al.*, 2014). Positive emotions among academic employees are framed by emotional, normative, and continuation commitments. Employees that experience these emotions perceive the organization as valuable, important, and attached, which influences their decision to stay. Therefore, enhancing organizational commitment lowers the intention to leave. According to Perreira *et al.* (2018), university leaders ought to give precedence to the dedication of their academic staff in order to enhance the likelihood of their university membership being extended. Faloye (2014) found that among paramilitary employees, organizational commitment had a positive relationship with turnover intention, which runs counter to this conclusion. Additionally, several studies have shown mixed findings. For instance, in his examination of millennials working in BPO, Budomo (2023) observed that turnover intention and organizational commitment were unrelated. Ulndag and colleagues (2011) also found no statistically significant variations in organizational commitment and turnover intention among front desk employees at five-star hotels in Cyprus.

Second, we found that affective commitment and turnover intention had a negative and substantial association. This indicates that academic staff members who identify with the organization's aims, are emotionally invested, content, and committed are more likely to stick around. According to our research, universities may prevent employee attrition by making sure that employees feel engaged, devoted, and connected. The findings show that instructors with a positive emotional view form a personal bond with their work, objectives, other people, and activities or initiatives, which inspires them to stick around. The current findings support the earlier research (Albrecht & Marty, 2020; Serhan *et al.,* 2022). They show that academic staff members stay at their institution when they have strong emotional ties with the institution. Employees that have a poor sense of affective bond also show less commitment to their jobs, objectives, and clients, and they feel less pressure to stick around. These results are consistent with those of Obeng et al. (2021), Gessesse and Premanandam (2023), and Xia *et al.* (2023). They noticed that dedicated workers typically had better experiences and a stronger sense of belonging to their company, which eventually lowers the risk of resignation. Our results, however, are at odds with those of previous research (Budomo, 2023; Ennis *et al.,* 2018), which suggested that affective commitment and turnover intention were unrelated. Additionally, our findings corroborate SET's claim that when workers perceive that the organization's objectives and policies are positive, they are less likely to plan to leave. The theory, literature, and our results all suggest that an increase in emotional values leads to a drop in turnover intention.

Furthermore, normative commitment and turnover intention have a negative relationship. According to this, academic staff members may find it easy to stay with an organization if they believe it to be one that values fairness, respect for all, recognition of loyalty, and a sense of duty. This is consistent with research conducted by Ramalho Luz *et al.* (2018) among ICT workers in northeastern Brazil, which found a negative and substantial correlation between employee turnover intention and the normative dimension. Furthermore, Budomo (2023) attested to the fact that millennials concurred that strong normative commitment played a role in their decision to remain in order to prevent feelings of guilt. Our findings, however, run counter to several previous research claims. Normative commitment was shown to be unrelated to police officers' intent to leave their jobs, according to research by Faloye (2014). Similarly, among food production and distribution workers, Harris and Cameron (2005) found no indication of a relationship between normative commitment and turnover intention.

Results show that there is no statistically significant correlation between turnover intention and continuance commitment. As per the current investigation, academic staff members' intention to leave Uganda is not significantly predicted by continuous commitment. The intention of academic personnel to remain or leave the university may not be influenced by perceived expenses such as benefits, pension plans, or

employment prospects outside the university. This discrepancy may be explained by the nature of the sample population, the measurement instruments employed, or the study's setting. This result is in line with that of Fernet *et al.* (2017), who found no connection between French-Canadian nurses' intention to leave their jobs and continuing commitment. Ramalho Luz *et al.* (2018), on the other hand, discovered that continuing commitment was practically independent of the intention to quit. Additionally, there was no correlation found between supervisors' intention to stay on and their intention to leave, according to Carbery *et al.* (2003). Furthermore, our findings concur with those of Harris and Cameron (2005), who found a statistically non-significant correlation between turnover intention and continuance commitment. However, our research contradicts that of Budomo (2023), who found a perfect correlation between turnover intention and continuance commitment. According to Meyer *et al.* (1993), turnover intention and continuance commitment have a negative relationship. In a study on the configuration of continuance commitment among federal employees in South and West Australia, Perryer *et al.* (2010) discovered a negative correlation between turnover intention and continuance commitment.

Conclusion

This study attempted to link organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) dimensions with turnover intention. We contribute to the broad understanding of how organizational commitment can drive turnover intention in varying institutional domains. Previously, not much research effort integrating these three sub-dimensions was explored, mainly in the HEIs targeting both private and public universities in Uganda. In particular, affective and normative commitment emerged as the main predictors of turnover intention, as reflected by the negative results in academic settings. This emphasizes the vital role that organizational commitment to HEIs unintentionally plays in improving the retention of academic staff. Yet, it is also evident that continuance commitment is not related to turnover intention in our study context. University managers are urged by the results of this investigation to concentrate on other elements that could account for their intention to leave. Overall, the theoretical and practical considerations of previous researchers are empirically supported by three hypothesized relationships. Last but not least, our findings support the notion that an academic staff member's decision to remain or leave a university is based on their assessment of the institution's offerings and social exchanges.

Implications

This study makes numerous theoretical and empirical contributions to the body of knowledge in organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) on turnover intention. Theoretically, our study is premised on social exchange theory, which holds that employees develop a sense of high organizational commitment when they perceive positive exchange from the organization. Specifically, universities that guarantee job security, fair treatment, offer support, and provide a conducive work environment are assured of staff availability, timely service delivery, reduced customer complaints, and reduced strikes that culminate in minimal turnover intention (Maryam *et al.*, 2021). Our research demonstrates that staff commitment is triggered by universities that implement these policies. Employee loyalty, satisfaction, and contentment with their organization are the results of this high level of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance), which lowers turnover intention. Universities must increase staff commitment through fair and objective practices (job security, personal attention, social and emotional support, favorable employment terms, and a cohesive and collaborative culture), guided by the reciprocity norm (Gouldner, 1960). This will allow academic staff to develop a sense of pride in their work and a passion for what they do, which will encourage them to stay at the universities.

The results have administrative ramifications for personnel in the education sector. Given its importance to the sustainability of organizational activities and results, organizational commitment is crucial

in these circumstances for the majority of organizations, especially modern HEIs that are severely lacking in the academicians who are qualified, competent, and skilled to carry out their mandate. According to research, organizational commitment has a significant influence on employee attitudes, making it a tool that HEIs can use to cultivate and create a stable workforce. Employers who support the organizational commitment function typically see an increase in staff attachment, involvement, identification, sense of duty, and loyalty as a preventative measure against employees' habitual withdrawal behaviors. Therefore, HEI decision-makers can minimize turnover intention by providing a harmonious, supportive, fair, and collaborative work environment that encourages academic staff to engage in affective and normative commitment. University HR managers should also encourage professional development for their employees since it not only improves their abilities but also gives them a feeling of loyalty and belongings in the work community. In addition, it is necessary to track attrition rates and perform departure interviews in order to determine the underlying causes. Knowing the reasons behind employee attrition can improve retention tactics. Lastly, academic institutions could compare and adopt other people's best methods. Compare HR procedures to those of peer organizations and the industry. Commitment methods can be improved by implementing cutting edge techniques and best practices. Therefore, in order to achieve desired results regarding intent to stay, university administrators and policymakers should invest in affective and normative activities, given the recognition of the role played by organizational commitment types in fulfilling academic staff obligations in HEIs.

Limitations and future research directions

The constraints of this research work serve as a basis for future work. First off, it might not be feasible to generalize our findings to other academic institutions and universities in Uganda because our sample was limited to academicians employed by eight Ugandan universities. This suggests that further study needs to be done in the same zone with a large sample size in order to allow for possible generalization. Second, our data is cross sectional which does not capture the dynamic changes among the variables that could result into biased estimates. Accordingly, future studies may be undertaken longitudinally to report such observed changes. Third, the study used a rigorously quantitative methodology that is confined to statistics and mostly relies on numerical data. To improve the validity of the results, future research may take into account qualitative measurements to obtain a deeper knowledge of turnover intention and its predictors within the educational context. Four, the only explanation for turnover intention we could find was organizational commitment. We kindly request that future studies include third variables (maybe a mediator or moderator) in order to add to the body of literature already in existence and provide a deeper understanding of this relationship. In summary, this study defies the conclusions of earlier social exchange research by revealing that continuance commitment has no bearing on turnover intention. This creates a possibility for additional study to see if this result holds true in other situations.

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