

**Human Resources Management Practices and Turnover  
Intentions of University Employees in Uganda**

**By**

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## **Extended Abstract**

The application of favourable human resource management practices is widely believed to affect employee attitudes and behaviours and lead to sustainable competitive advantage. However, although a lot of empirical research has demonstrated that the use of human resources management practices is positively associated with favourable employee and organisational outcomes (such as reduced turnover, better financial returns, and improved employee morale), it remains unclear how the relationship is actualised.

In the Ugandan context it has been reported that universities are losing their senior employees through voluntary turnover. Yet human resource management practices have been suggested as the necessary intervention which can be used to control voluntary turnover of competent employees. In spite of the high level of voluntary turnover among university employees, little attention has been given to examining the antecedents that compel university employees to leave.

The primary goal of this study is to design and test a model of the relationship between human resource management practices and employee turnover intentions, and to further determine the mediating effects of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour in the HRM-turnover intention relationship.

A study of the available literature was undertaken to learn as much as possible about each of the five constructs and to determine what is known about the relationships between the constructs. Based on social exchange theory (SET) and the theory of reasoned action (TRA), the knowledge obtained from the literature review was used to propose a conceptual model and several hypotheses about the relationships between the constructs. The conceptual model and the hypothesised relationships were then tested using exploratory factor analysis, using SPSS Version 19.0, and structural equation modelling (confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis), using AMOS Version 20.0.

Data were collected from both teaching and non-teaching staff of six universities (three public and three private universities, N=722) using existing instruments. Each of the instruments was validated through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis and found to have excellent reliability and validity.

The findings demonstrate that a system of 8 human resources management practices (recruitment and selection, rewards and recognition, training and development, promotion opportunities, information sharing, participation in decision making, employment security and performance appraisal) was negatively related to turnover intentions among university employees. In addition, consistent with the hypotheses, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and organisational citizenship behaviour were positively associated with a system of human resource management practices and negatively related to turnover intentions. The study further found that the relationship between HRM practices and turnover intentions was mediated by job satisfaction and organisational commitment. However, contrary to expectation, organisational citizenship behaviour did not mediate the relationship between HRM practices and turnover intentions. Finally, though not initially hypothesised, the results show that the relationship between HRM practices and organisational commitment was mediated by job satisfaction.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous researchers who have suggested job satisfaction and organisational commitment are key among the factors within the black-box of the mediating mechanisms between HRM practices and employee outcomes. The findings shed light on the processes through which the implementation of favourable HRM practices can affect employee outcomes. On a practical perspective, the preliminary findings highlight the need for university managers attempting to improve employee retention to apply favourable human resource management practices. Consistent with the theory of social exchange, the findings support the notion that HRM practices communicate to employee that they are valued partners of the organisation.