

Leadership styles, job satisfaction and organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities

Organizational
commitment
in universities

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between leadership styles and Organizational commitment among academic staff in Ugandan Public Universities, mediated by Job Satisfaction.

Design/methodology/approach – The study was cross-sectional, quantitative, and used correlation and regression to test the hypothesis. A sample of 353 academic staff was drawn from five public universities in Uganda, of which a response rate of 66 percent was obtained.

Findings – Organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities in Uganda depends on the age of the academic staff, length of service, position level, leadership styles employed, and job satisfaction. Findings further show that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment.

Research limitations/implications – Only a single research methodological approach was employed; thus, future research through interviews could be undertaken to triangulate.

Practical implications – In order to boost the organizational commitment among academic staff in Ugandan Public Universities, managers should always endeavor to employ a blend of leadership styles that leads to job satisfaction and can add value to the employee-employer relationship.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the body of knowledge by finding further support on the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment among academic staff in Ugandan public universities. It further demonstrates that job satisfaction partially transmits the effect of leadership styles on organizational commitment in public universities in Uganda.

Keywords Leadership styles, Job satisfaction, Organizational commitment, Public universities

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

One of the biggest challenges that organizations have been facing over recent years is to make employees become psychologically attached to their organizations. Organizational commitment is essential if any organization is to achieve its goals and organizational citizenship behavior (Obedgiu *et al.*, 2017). Organizations with committed employees tend to prosper and perform better than those that do not have (Yulk, 2010). It is the committed people that make organizations succeed (Decenzo and Robbins, 1999). Employees with high levels of affective commitment are less absent from work, high performers, and likely to engage in organizational citizenship behavior, such as helping other members, putting extra effort, and being an advocate for an organization (Obedgiu *et al.*, 2017). Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016) noted that the style of leadership employed by the organization plays an important role in boosting organizational commitment. Matongolo, Kasekende, and Mafabi (2018) noted that management in the institution of higher learning should be more aware of the environment that enhances talent retention. When leaders develop and adjust their leadership styles to better suit their followers,



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organizational commitment is enhanced (Chuang, 2013). A good leader does not only inspire subordinates' potential to improve efficiency and effectiveness but also meets their behavioral and attitudinal requirements, such as organizational commitment in the process of achieving organizational goals (Yulk, 2010). Employees who are pleased with their leaders and feel that they are being treated with respect and are valued by their management feel more attachment with their organizations (Burke *et al.*, 2002; Meyer *et al.*, 2002). When employees are dissatisfied at work, they are less committed and will look for other opportunities to quit (Lok and Crawford, 2004). Thus, the leader's actions are crucial in affecting the attitude, behavior, and potential of the organization's employees (Williams *et al.*, 1986).

In Ugandan Universities, there are elements where leaders' actions may promote or inhibit commitment. There are cases where university leaders encourage subordinates, give them responsibilities and challenging tasks, delegate, and prepare them for leadership, participate in decision making, among others. All these lead to job satisfaction, and subsequently, high organizational commitment (Turinawe, 2011). On the other hand, there are also cases of administrative injustices characterized by unfair dismissals, irregular salary payments, poor recruitment and selection system, promotions not based on skills and competences, poor remuneration of staff, and poor working conditions. All these lead to job dissatisfaction and low organizational commitment (Amutuhaire, 2010).

Universities in Uganda have tended to train their staff probably as a way of promoting organizational commitment. However, a good number of such staff have always left for greener pastures. For example, Makerere University Business School (MUBS) sponsors academic staff to undertake Masters and PhD programs with the view that they will be motivated and work for the institution after graduation. In January 2015, of the two PhDs who graduated, one left after serving two years, and another did not serve at all (MUBS Annual HR Report, 2017). In 2017, it graduated 11 PhDs. Of these, three had left even before serving the bond period. At the master's degree level, MUBS graduated over 15 academic staff in 2017, of whom four have left and joined other competing institutions. In 2011, Makerere University lost 25 high profile lecturers, while Mbarara University of Science and Technology lost 20 highly skilled lecturers, and Gulu University continues to lose ten senior lecturers every academic year (Auditor-General Report, 2016). These losses have far reaching impact on both the functioning of academics in the institution and its financial status.

Although there have been several studies concerning organizational commitment in Uganda, such as Seijaaka and Kaawaase (2014); Obedgiu *et al.* (2017), little theoretical and empirical attention has been paid to the impact of leadership styles and organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities in Uganda, as mediated by job satisfaction. Furthermore, Opolot (2011) had earlier noted that the relationship between leadership styles, job satisfaction, and their influence on the organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities in Uganda has received minimum attention, and thus, calls for more research. Thus, this study helps in examining the extent to which leadership styles influence organizational commitment, as mediated by job satisfaction among academic staff in Uganda, where reports have shown that public universities in Uganda are witnessing a mass exodus of academics in the recent past to find better alternatives elsewhere.

The rest of the sections include a literature review and hypothesis development, methodology, findings, discussion of findings, conclusion, managerial implication, limitations, and areas for further study.

Literature review and hypothesis development

Organizational commitment

The term organizational commitment was defined in terms of the extent to which an employee identifies with and is involved with an organization (Curry *et al.*, 1986).

Organizational commitment is a state in which an employee feels loyalty to the organization, accepts and internalizes goals and values of it, and involves in the organization (Lambert *et al.*, 2007). According to Meyer and Allen (1997), a committed employee is the one who stays with the organization through thick and thin, attends work regularly, puts in a full day, protects the company's assets, shares company goals, and others. Thus, having a committed workforce would be an added advantage to an organization. Meyer and Allen (1991) classified commitment into three forms (affective, continuance, and normative). Affective commitment is the employees' emotional attachment with the organization. Continuance commitment refers to the employees' recognition of the benefits of continued association with the organization compared to the perceived cost of leaving the organization. Normative commitment refers to the employee's feeling of obligation to stay in the organization.

Job satisfaction

Spector (1997) defined job satisfaction, simply as to how contented an employee is with his or her job. Thompson and Phua (2012) have noted that job satisfaction varies in the extent to which they measure feelings about the job (affective) or cognitions about the job (cognitive). Furthermore, it is defined as the degree to which a person is pleased or satisfied with his/her job (Shim *et al.*, 2002). More satisfied and happy employees would be more productive than the unsatisfied ones (Saari and Judge, 2004). Job satisfaction creates positive attitudes in employees, boosts up their morals, improves their performance, and creates pleasant relationships with coworkers. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be more creative and innovative, flourish, and bring positive changes to their organizations. This study thus operationalized job satisfaction into two indicators, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic job satisfaction refers to how employees feel about the nature of the job tasks themselves, whereas extrinsic job satisfaction refers to how employees feel about the aspects of the work situation that are external to the job tasks or work itself.

Leadership styles

Leadership styles have continued to be one of the most widely discussed areas by researchers from all over the world (Megheirkouni, 2017); Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016). Jong and Hartog (2007) described leadership as a process to influence people in order to get the desired results. Lok and Crawford (2004) noted that leadership plays a vital role in determining the success and failure of a firm. Bass and Avolio (1997) noted that leaders help to stimulate, motivate, encourage, and recognize their followers in order to get key performance results. Leadership styles, according to this study, have been operationalized as transformational and transactional leadership styles. Transformational leadership refers to an ability of leaders to motivate subordinates to achieve performance beyond expectations by transforming the subordinates' attitudes, beliefs, and values as opposed to simply gaining compliance (Rafferty and Griffin, 2004). Bass (1985) theorized that transformational leadership comprises four dimensions: Intellectual stimulation, which involves stimulating followers by questioning assumptions, challenging the status quo, and encouraging problem reformulation, imagination, intellectual curiosity, and novel approaches. Individualized consideration, which focuses on followers' development and paying attention to followers' needs, showing empathy, and showing appreciation and support of individual followers' initiatives and viewpoints. Charisma, or idealized influence, which has to do with serving as the followers' charismatic role model. Finally, inspirational motivation, which involves energizing followers by articulating a compelling vision. It is also defined as the leader moving the subordinate beyond immediate self-interests. On the other hand, Burns (1978) noted that transactional leadership occurs when one person connects with others for the

intention of an exchange of valued things that could be economic or political or psychological in nature. Burns noted that both parties have related purposes, but the relationship does not go beyond the exchange of valued benefits.

Leadership styles and organizational commitment

Various scholars' have found a positive relationship between leadership and organizational commitment (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Voon *et al.* (2010) noted that leadership styles that encourage employee commitment are essential for an organization to successfully implement business strategies, achieving their goals, and gain competitive advantage. Yousef (2000) suggested that participative and inclusive leadership styles are more positively associated with commitment than task-oriented or structured styles. He noted that employees are highly committed to their organizations, more satisfied with their jobs, and produce higher job performance when they work under the supervision of leaders who adopt consultative or participative leadership behavior. Turinawe (2011) added that reward systems have a significant effect on the levels of organizational commitment in public higher institutions of learning in Uganda. Furthermore, Matongolo, Kasekende, and Mafabi (2018) found that the reward strategy and people orientedness are significant predictors of talent retention among employees in the higher institutions of learning in Uganda.

Elsewhere, studies conducted on leadership styles and organizational commitment (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Voon *et al.*, 2010) have found a strong positive relationship between leadership and organizational commitment. Kim, Eisenberger, and Baik (2016) also noted that involving employees' perception that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, has been found to be the work experience most strongly linked to their emotional bond to the organization. Lok and Crawford (1999) found out that leadership style consideration had a stronger influence on commitment than the leadership style structure. Lee (2004) also found out that transformational leadership correlates significantly with organizational commitment. On the contrary, transactional leadership does not have a significant relationship with organizational commitment. Hayward *et al.* (2004) noted that transformational leadership has a moderate positive correlation with effective commitment. They found lower correlation coefficients between transformational leadership and normative and continuance commitment. They also found no correlation between transactional leadership and affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Bass and Avolio (1997) posited that transformational leadership has a positive relationship with both affective commitment and normative commitment. Similarly, a positive correlation was found between intellectual stimulation and both affective commitment and normative commitment. Bass and Avolio (1997) again revealed that transformational leaders who encourage their followers to think critically and creatively could have an influence on their followers' commitment. They noted that transformational leaders can motivate and increase followers' motivation and organizational commitment by getting them to solve problems creatively and also understanding their needs. This argument is further supported by the transformational leadership theory by Burns (1978), which was further developed by Bass and Avolio (1997), which states that all the four components, charismatic role modeling, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation of transformational leadership, influence organizational commitment.

In a study by Namubiru *et al.* (2017) on University Leadership during times of significant transformation of Kyambogo University in Uganda, found out that university leaders regularly consulted stakeholders whenever a decision is to be made. They further noted that Kyambogo University leaders provide regular feedback to the stakeholders, and the majority of the support staff felt inspired by the university leaders. Namubiru *et al.* (2017) further noted that Kyambogo University leaders frequently communicated with stakeholders and that that

the university leadership encourage teamwork. However, they noted that there is a wide distance between senior administrators and the professionals at the operational level, who directly serve the students on a daily basis. This is what is causing tension between top administrators and the staff. From this discussion, we, therefore, hypothesize that:

H1. Leadership styles has a positive and significant relationship on organizational commitment.

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment have received significant attention in studies of the workplace. This is due to the general recognition that these variables can be the major determinants of organizational performance (Riketta, 2002) and effectiveness (Laschinger, 2001).

Different researchers have reported mixed findings on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Curry *et al.* (1986) found no significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Lok and Crawford (1999) found that job satisfaction was a significant predictor of organizational commitment. Other researchers have argued that job satisfaction reflects direct affective reactions to the job while commitment to the organization develops more slowly after the individual forms more comprehensive valuations of the employing organization, its values, and expectations and one's own future in it. Therefore, job satisfaction is seen as one of the predictors of organizational commitment (Mannheim *et al.*, 1997). It is thus expected that highly satisfied workers are more committed to the organization (Lambert *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, Williams and Hazer (1986), concluded that the consideration dimension of leadership style influences commitment indirectly via their effects on job satisfaction. Gunlu *et al.* (2010) related employee's job satisfaction with its characteristics and organizational commitment by identifying its impact over it. Their results show that employee's intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction is strongly and closely related to normative commitment. A study by Odoch and Sudi (2014) found a significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in Uganda Colleges of Commerce. Sejaaka and Kaawaase (2014) also found that job satisfaction is positively and the best predictor of organizational commitment amongst accounting professionals in Uganda. Turinawe (2011) had also earlier found a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in public higher institutions of learning in Uganda. Thus we hypothesize that;

H2. Job Satisfaction positively and significantly associates with organizational commitment.

Leadership styles and job satisfaction

Leadership styles play a vital role in influencing employees' job satisfaction (Lashbrook, 1997). Bass (1985) noted that transformational leadership intrinsically foster job satisfaction, given its ability to impart a sense of mission and intellectual stimulation. Transformational leaders tend to encourage and motivate their followers to take on more responsibility and autonomy, thereby enhancing employees' sense of accomplishment and satisfaction with their job. Both transactional and transformational leadership have been widely linked to positive individual and organizational consequences (Bass and Riggio, 2006). These leadership styles are found to correlate positively with employee perceptions of job, leader, and organizational satisfaction. The quality of the leader-employee relationship or the lack thereof has a great influence on the employee's self-esteem and job satisfaction. Employees are more satisfied with leaders who are considerate or

supportive than with those who are either indifferent or critical towards subordinates (Ribelin, 2003; Bogler, 2001). Wilkinson and Wagner (1993) argued that it is stressful for employees to work with a leader who has a hostile behavior and is unsupportive. Negative leader-employee relations reduce productivity and increase absenteeism, and subsequently, turnover can be quite high (Keashly *et al.*, 1994). Furthermore, according to the Leader Member Exchange theory (Dienesch and Liden, 1986), the quality of the relationship between a leader and follower influences outcomes, such as subordinate-supervisor satisfaction. High-quality exchange relationships include providing employees with challenging tasks, support in risky situations, and the provision of task-related resources and recognition; all these subsequently lead to job satisfaction. However, Lok and Crawford (2004) found that leadership style had a significant negative effect on satisfaction. In Uganda, Musinguzi *et al.* (2018) found that health workers prefer leaders who employ transformational compared with being transactional or laissez-faire. They also found that transformational leadership and transactional leadership were positively correlated with job satisfaction in the health sector in Uganda. In addition, Odubuker (2016) found a moderate correlation between participative leadership, directive leadership and job satisfaction, and a strong correlation between achievement-oriented leadership and job satisfaction among the employees of the Uganda Management Institute. Thus, we hypothesize that;

H3. Leadership Styles has a positive influence on Job Satisfaction.

Methodology

A cross-sectional research design and a quantitative approach were adopted for this study. This helped us to collect data at one point in time and to prove or disprove the hypothesis formulated (Creswell, 2014). The study population consisted of 3,113 academic staff from major public universities in Uganda (Makerere University, Kyambogo University, Gulu University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, and Busitema University). A sample of 353 respondents was generated using the Krejcie and Morgan sample selection approach (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). All academic staff, ranging from teaching assistant to Professor, participated in this study. Simple random sampling was applied for sample selection. The selection procedure involved the picking of pieces of paper in a box without replacement until 353 academic staff were selected. In total, 284 usable questionnaires were received, indicating a response rate of 66 percent.

Primary data were collected by the use of self-administered questionnaires. All the items on the questionnaire were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree "1" to strongly agree "5" on all study variables. All the questionnaire items were modified to suit universities, for example, job satisfaction (My present pay is satisfactory; there is a good deal of teamwork and cooperation between supervisors and supervisors at the university; compared to professionals at other places, the pay at the university is fair). On leadership styles (in a university; employees are supervised closely; employees are supported, and employees are given orders on what to do), organizational commitment (I am proud to be part of this university, I talk about my university to my friends as a great university to work for, I feel I have an obligation to remain in the university).

Potential causes of common methods bias were addressed in order to reduce the measurement error (random and systematic errors), which normally threatens the validity and the conclusions about relationships between the study variables (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). The questionnaire was then validated through expert interviews and a panel of practitioners. The questionnaires were assessed to ensure that the items were meaningful, generally understandable, and captured the issues under study. All the variables registered a Content Validity Index of above 0.70, indicating a valid instrument. We further tested for the

reliability of the instrument to test for the internal consistencies of the scales used to measure the variables (Nunnally, 1978). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for leadership styles and its indicators was 0.8231. The alpha coefficient for job satisfaction was 0.7942, while the alpha coefficient for organizational commitment was 0.8794. These results suggest a fair level of internal consistency in the responses.

Organizational commitment was measured and operationalized as affective, continuance, and normative commitment, according to Meyer and Allen (1997). Job satisfaction was measured and operationalized as intrinsic and extrinsic. Job satisfaction items were adopted from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and job satisfaction Survey (Weiss *et al.*, 1967; Spector's, 1997). Leadership style items were adopted from Bass and Avolio (1997) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, and it has been operationalized as transactional and transformational leadership styles. These two leadership styles were found to be the most relevant in Ugandan universities because university managers encourage, inspire, and motivate academic staff to do work, while others use rewards and punishments to have work done.

The collected data on was edited, categorized, or coded, and processed using Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS v 20). Data screening was carried out to check for errors arising from incorrect data entry, out of range values, outliers, missing values, and also normality (Field, 2005). Results were presented in form of respondents' characteristics, descriptive statistics, correlations, and predictive potential. Tests for mediation were conducted to establish the nature of mediation and the extent to which job satisfaction influences the association between leadership styles and organizational commitment. The test for mediation was carried out based on the works of Baron and Kenny (1986).

Results

Respondent's characteristics

On the academic staff characteristics, the majority were in the 31–35 year age bracket (43.0%), male comprising of 52.8%, at Lecturer level representing 41.2%, employed on permanent terms (67%). Majority had masters' degree (38%) and had worked with the university for a period of 6–10 years representing 48.9%. These results imply that the majority of the respondents had worked in universities for some time, a clear indication that they knew and understood the factors that predict job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Descriptive statistics

Means and standard deviations of global variables were generated to summarize the observed data. This is because, according to Field (2005), means represent a summary of the data while standard deviations show how well the means represent the data (see Table I).

With regards to means of the study variables, leadership style has a higher mean (Mean = 3.78) than other variables that is job satisfaction (Mean = 3.71) and Organizational

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Leadership style	284	1.00	5.00	3.78	0.874
Job satisfaction	284	1.00	5.00	3.71	0.891
Organizational commitment	284	1.00	5.00	3.56	0.833

Source: Primary data

Table I.
Means and standard
deviation

commitment (Mean = 3.56). This is an indication that academic staff are in agreement that either transactional or transformational leadership styles or both are employed in universities.

Correlation analysis

In order to initially examine the strength and direction of the relationship between leadership styles, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, we performed Pearson (*r*) correlation coefficient. The results are shown in Table II.

Results in Table II indicate a significant and positive correlation between leadership styles and organizational commitment ($r = 0.608, p < 0.01$). This implies that as leadership style improves, so do the organizational commitment amongst academic staff in public universities in Uganda. More so, the components of leadership styles that transactional and transformational leadership styles are associated with organizational commitment by ($r = 0.379, p < 0.01$ and $r = 0.448, p \leq 0.01$) respectively. This implies that the transformational leadership style is related to organizational commitment more than transactional leadership styles in public universities in Uganda.

Results in Table II also show a significant and positive correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment ($r = 0.495, p < 0.01$). This implies that when academic staff are satisfied with their job, organizational commitment may be enhanced. Academic staff may not see any reason for quitting universities for greener pastures because they are satisfied with their jobs.

Further, the results in Table II show that leadership styles and job satisfaction are significantly and positively correlated ($r = 0.407, p < 0.01$) implying that when leadership style improves, job satisfaction tends to increase. The components of leadership styles that is transactional and transformational leadership styles also positively associated with job satisfaction by ($r = 0.248, p < 0.01$ and $r = 0.367, p < 0.01$) respectively. Again, the transformational leadership style emerged is strongly related to job satisfaction than transactional leadership style.

Regression model

To ascertain the predictive power of leadership styles, job satisfaction on organizational commitment, we carried out a hierarchical regression analysis. Our interest was on both control variables and study variables, although control variables were not in the main scope of the study. Results in Table III show that control variables in model 1 (age of academic staff, position level, level of education, gender, length of service, type of a contract) account for 31.9% ($r^2 = 0.319$) of the variance in organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities in Uganda. Specifically, the age of academic staff was significantly and positively associated with organizational commitment among the academic staff in public universities in models 1 to 4 with the following betas ($b = 0.12, 0.231, 0.226, 0.278, p < 0.01$)

	1	2	3	4	5
Transactional-1	1.000				
Transformational-2	0.267**	1.000			
Leadership styles-3	0.390**	0.716**	1.000		
Job satisfaction-4	0.248**	0.367**	0.407**	1.000	
Organizational commitment-5	0.379**	0.448**	0.608**	0.495**	1.000

Table II.
Correlation analysis

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Control variables</i>				
Age of respondents	0.12**	0.231**	0.226**	0.278**
Position level	0.114**	0.121**	0.127**	0.131**
Gender	-0.038	-0.036	-0.045	-0.042
Level of education	-0.138**	-0.131**	-0.127**	-0.115*
Length of service	0.22**	0.25**	0.26**	0.29**
Type of contract	0.028	0.034	0.036	0.033
Leadership styles		0.391**	0.312	0.309**
Job satisfaction			0.185**	0.231**
Organizational commitment				0.238**
Model <i>F</i>	17.11**	16.89**	18.65**	20.15**
<i>R</i>	0.587	0.613	0.623	0.674
<i>R</i> ²	0.345	0.376	0.388	0.454
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.319	0.349	0.362	0.425
<i>F</i> Change	19.56	24.88	43.23	73.12
Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Table III.
Hierarchical
Regression analysis:
control variables,
leadership styles, job
satisfaction on
organizational
commitment

respectively. This implies that when academic staff tend to grow older, their level of organizational commitment increases. Academic staff in their old ages are more satisfied with their job, and thus, a justifiable reason to remain in the university. In addition, the level of education was found to be negatively associated with organizational commitment in models 1 to 4 with the following betas ($b = -0.138, -0.131, -0.127, -115, p < 0.01$) respectively. This implies that as the level of education of academic staff increases, organizational commitment tends to reduce. This is attributable to the fact that highly educated individuals have high expectations and are more likely to feel that they are not being rewarded adequately by universities, and so the level of organizational commitment reduces. More so, the position level of academic staff has been found to be positively correlated with organizational commitment in models 1 to 4 with the following betas ($b = 0.114, 0.121, 0.127, 0.131, p < 0.01$) respectively. This implies that academic staff in higher positions are more satisfied with their jobs, and thus, a justifiable reason to remain in the university. Gender of academic staff was found to be negatively associated with organizational commitment, indicating a slight tendency of males to be less committed. Length of service was found to be positively associated with organizational commitment in models 1 to 4 with the following betas ($b = 0.22, 0.25, 0.26, 0.29, p < 0.01$) respectively, implying that as academic staff serve the university for more years, their level of committed increases. Lastly, results further indicate that type of a contract has no significant association with organizational commitment ($b = 0.028, 0.034, 0.036$ and $0.033, p > 0.01$). This implies that the type of contract is not an issue in as far as organizational commitment is concerned.

When leadership styles was entered into the equation in model 2, the predictive power increased to 34.9% (adjusted $r^2 = 0.349$) of the variance in organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities Uganda. When job satisfaction was entered into the equation in model 3, the predictive power increased to 36.2% (adjusted $r^2 = 0.362$) of the variance in organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities Uganda.

Finally, results in Table III show that both control and study variables (leadership styles and Job satisfaction) in model 4 explain 42.5% (adjusted $r^2 = 0.425$) of the variance in organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities Uganda. However, it was noted that addressing leadership styles (Beta = 0.39.1) should take priority over Job satisfaction (Beta = 0.185) if the organizational commitment among academic staff is to be ensured in public universities in Uganda.

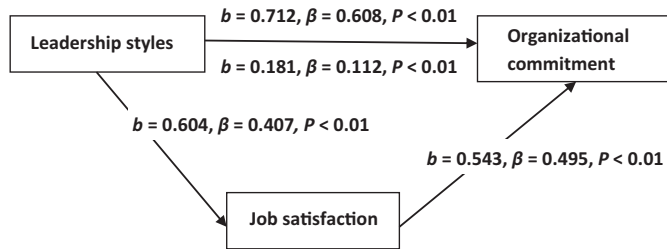
Testing for mediation

We followed Baron and Kenny procedures of mediation testing (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Figure 1 shows that job satisfaction, when controlled, partially mediated the association between leadership styles and organizational commitment. The correlation between leadership styles and organizational commitment decreased from 0.608** to 0.112** by the inclusion of job satisfaction as a mediating variable (See Table IV).

Discussion of findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment among academic staff in Ugandan Public Universities; mediated by Job Satisfaction. Results show that the age of academic staff was significantly and positively associated with organizational commitment among the academic staff in public universities. This implies that whenever academic staff tend to grow old, their level of commitment in the university increases. Results suggest that older academic staff are more satisfied with the job, having better positions, and thus, old academic staff find it as a justifiable reason to remain in the university. This result is in agreement with Mathieu and Zajac (1990), who found out that age is strongly associated to attitudinal than behavioral commitment. Lok and Crawford (2001) also found that the age of nurses has a significant positive effect on commitment. However, Iqbal et al. (2011) found that age is not related to commitment.

In, addition, level of education was found to be negatively associated with organizational commitment implying that highly educated staff are less committed to the university. As academic staff acquire more education, organizational commitment tends to reduce. High levels of education make them more marketable in other organizations with better employment terms than a university. This result is consistent with Mathieu and Zajac (1990), who found a negative relationship between education level and organizational commitment. Iqbal et al. (2011) also found that the level of education and commitment are negatively



Source: Direct effect = 0.712, indirect effect = 0.181, Total effect = 0.893

Figure 1. Mediation

Table IV. Regression model for partial mediation

Equation	Regression	Coeff.	SE	T	Sig.
	b(A,B)	0.712	0.108	4.67	0.000
	b(A,C)	0.604	0.102	4.51	0.000
	b(C,D)	0.543	0.112	4.33	0.000
	b(A,C,B)	0.118	0.122	3.26	0.000
	Sobel	3.725	0.108		0.000

Notes: A = leadership styles, B = organizational commitment, C = Job satisfaction

related. However, the result contradicts [Lok and Crawford \(2004\)](#), who found a statistically significant positive association between education and commitment.

Length of service was found to be positively associated with organizational commitment, implying that the more time academic staff serve, the more committed they become. This is consistent with [Mathieu and Zajac \(1990\)](#), who found that the number of years in a position is significantly positively related to attitudinal commitment, and length of service is significantly positively related to behavioral commitment. It also confirms [Igbal et al. \(2011\)](#) research that indicates that length of service or tenure is positively related to organizational commitment.

Gender of academic staff was found to be negatively associated with organizational commitment, indicating a slight tendency of males to be less committed. Reasons advanced include low pay and limited promotion opportunities. The study is in agreement with [Mathieu and Zajac \(1990\)](#), who found that females have been observed as being more committed than their male counterparts. However, this contradicts [Aydin et al. \(2012\)](#), who found that males have higher level of commitment than females.

Furthermore, results indicate that leadership styles (transformational and transactional) are significantly correlated with organizational commitment in public universities in Uganda. This implies that [H1](#) was supported. This means that when university managers inspire, motivate, recognize, encourage, reward, stimulate, and build a one to one relationship with academic staff, organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities in Uganda tends to increase. The result confirms an earlier study by [Marmaya et al. \(2011\)](#), who found out that both transformational and transactional leadership have a positive relationship with organizational commitment. However, [Lee \(2004\)](#) found that it is only transformational leadership that correlates significantly with organizational commitment. Contrary, Lee further found that transactional leadership does not have a significant relationship with organizational commitment.

Findings further indicate a positive association between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This means [hypothesis 2](#) was supported. This result implies that when academic staff are satisfied with their work through having better working conditions, chances of them staying with the public universities in Uganda increases. This finding is in line with [Aksu and Aktas \(2005\)](#), who noted that the working conditions should be improved in order to increase the general job satisfaction of the managers. However, the finding is contrary to [Curry et al. \(1986\)](#), who found no significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It is also contrary to [Salahudin et al. \(2016\)](#) who noted that Generation Y has a different workplace attitudes and are willing to change organizations for better opportunities and appreciation. However, this does not mean that they do not give a great commitment to the current organization ([Cruz, 2007](#)).

Findings also posit a positive association between leadership styles and job satisfaction. This means [hypothesis 3](#) was supported. This finding implies when leaders give academic staff the necessary freedom to take decisions, provide them opportunities to improve themselves by additional training programs, provide counseling and career development support, reward them by incentive programs, fringe benefits, empower them and encourage their participation in some top-level discussions, encourage them to develop some projects and form their own team and give them better and convenient working conditions, the level of job satisfaction tends to increase. This finding is consistent with [Bass \(1985\)](#), who noted that transformational leadership intrinsically foster more job satisfaction, given its ability to impart a sense of mission and intellectual stimulation. This is, however, contrary to [Lok and Crawfordd \(2004\)](#), who found a negative relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction.

Finally, results further show that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment. This means that job satisfaction is

a conduit through which leadership styles relate to organizational commitment. This result implies that when academic staff are satisfied with the way leaders are treating them, it will motivate them to remain working with the universities. This result confirms [Lok and Crawford \(2001\)](#) findings that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between leadership style and the employee's commitment.

Conclusion, managerial implications, and study limitations

The study examined the relationship between leadership styles and Organizational Commitment among academic staff in Ugandan Public Universities; mediated by Job Satisfaction. This study has confirmed that leadership styles and job satisfaction are greatly correlated with organizational commitment in public universities in Uganda. With both transformational and transactional leadership styles, universities in Uganda will be able to retain the academic staff. The changing nature of higher education suggests that effective leadership, satisfied and committed employees are needed to cope with the demand imposed upon universities to produce skilled graduates. The other most important finding is that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment in public universities in Uganda. When academic staff are recognized, inspired, and rewarded by university managers, their level of job satisfaction will tend to increase, and organizational commitment will be promoted. We, thus note that the style and quality of leadership employed by university managers contribute to the satisfaction of its employees and subsequently improves organizational commitment in Public Universities. Thus, the study adds to the growing debate on organizational commitment and its predictors. We, thus, note that the involvement of academic staff in decision making, having a good relationship and encouragement by university managers motivate them to continue working with the organization. Therefore, there is a need for university managers to design strategies of motivating academic staff to remain employed in universities. In this case, public universities should strive to create a workplace that is open, friendly, and sincere, and emphasizes honesty in order to keep academic staff. Open and friendly workplaces make teaching a pleasant career for academic staff, and thus, rendering them to consider the teaching profession as their first choice. Creating a friendly working environment gives a feel that they are recognized, respected by management, and subsequently, organizational commitment. Thus, academic staff in universities will find it unlikely to look for a new job in the near future when managers offer the best leadership style.

In addition, university managers should create a workplace where staff innovative and creative thinking capabilities are encouraged and valued. This results in wishing that even the following day would find them at work. Furthermore, workplaces where staff competencies are valued and rewarded; there is a likelihood to improve the level of retention of academic staff. This is because it motivates the academic staff that always wishes to remain teaching in such university for a long time and will find it unlikely to look for new employment.

This study was cross-sectional in nature, which measures the intention only at a single point in time. Thus, the study does not provide findings over a long period of time. We, however, note that a longitudinal study would be more appropriate in the future. This study focused on academic staff in public universities in Uganda; therefore, findings may not be generalized to all employees of public universities and other organizations. More so, future research is needed on other factors that could be contributing to the remaining 57.5% of organizational commitment. Finally, only a single research methodological approach was used, that is, a quantitative approach. Future research through interviews could be undertaken to triangulate.

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