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The role of self-efficacy dimensions on organisational commitment: a study of academic staff in Ugandan universities

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ABSTRACT

While self-efficacy is widely recognized as a predictor of organizational commitment (OC), existing literature mainly treats it as a single-dimensional construct, which conceals the specific roles of its underlying sources. Drawing on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), this study fills this gap by breaking down self-efficacy into four theoretically based dimensions of enactive mastery, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal. The study investigates how each dimension independently affects OC among academic staff in Ugandan public and private universities. Using a cross-sectional survey, data were gathered from 574 faculty members and analyzed through hierarchical regression in SPSS v27. Results show that all four self-efficacy dimensions significantly influence OC, collectively accounting for 14.6% of its variance. Although the modest explanatory power reflects the complex nature of OC, the findings provide a detailed, contextually relevant advancement beyond global self-efficacy models. This research extends SCT by validating its dimensional structure in a non-Western higher education setting. Practically, it provides practical levers for university leaders in resource-limited settings to increase staff retention through targeted interventions in mentoring, feedback, professional development, and well-being support. Finally, the findings of this study helps develop more accurate, culturally responsive strategies for improving OC in African higher education.

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Introduction

Organisational commitment (OC) remains a cornerstone fueling institutional resilience, performance, and sustainability in higher education (De Nobile & Bilgin, 2022; Dube & Ndofirepi, 2024). Committed academic staff demonstrate higher levels of engagement, productivity, and loyalty qualities essential for delivering quality teaching, advancing research, and fulfilling community mandates in increasingly complex educational landscapes (Alaqla, 2020; Gollagari et al., 2024). Nowhere is this more critical than in sub-Saharan Africa, where universities grapple with chronic underfunding, infrastructural deficits, and escalating staff attrition (Abebe & Assemie, 2023). In Uganda, for instance, Makerere University lost 25% of its academic workforce between 2015 and 2019 due to resignations, dismissals, and unauthorized absences phenomena directly linked to weak OC (Muyiggwa et al., 2020; Muyiggwa & Kiyangi, 2022). Similar trends at Kyambogo University and other public institutions underscore a systemic challenge. Without committed faculty, national aspirations for quality education and sustainable development as

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envisaged in Uganda's Vision 2040 and NDP III (2020–2025) remain precarious (Fraser & Lockheed, 2021; Leikuma-Rimicane et al., 2021).

In response, scholars have increasingly turned to psychological resources as levers for strengthening OC. Among these, self-efficacy (SE), known as an individual's belief in their capacity to execute tasks and influence outcomes (Bandura et al., 1999) has emerged as a robust predictor of workplace attachment across sectors (Akhtar et al., 2013; Van Vuuren et al., 2008). However, a critical limitation persists in the extant literature where SE is overwhelmingly treated as a global, unidimensional construct, obscuring the distinct mechanisms through which its foundational sources operate. Bandura's (1986) SCT posits that SE arises from four interrelated yet theoretically distinct dimensions: enactive mastery (personal accomplishments), vicarious experiences (observational learning), verbal persuasion (social encouragement), and physiological arousal (emotional and somatic states). Despite this conceptual richness, empirical studies in organisational contexts, including higher education, routinely collapse these dimensions into a single composite score (Hameli & Ordun, 2022; Soomro et al., 2024), thereby forfeiting granular insights into which sources of efficacy most powerfully shape commitment. Despite the recognised importance of self-efficacy in influencing employee behaviour, there remains a limited understanding of how its four sources independently shape organisational commitment within African higher education systems. Much of the existing scholarship treats SE as a unidimensional or global construct (Hameli & Ordun, 2022; Soomro et al., 2024), thereby obscuring the distinct mechanisms through which enactive mastery, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion and physiological arousal operate. This omission is particularly significant in Ugandan universities, where high workloads, resource scarcity, and rigid hierarchical structures may differentially activate or suppress specific efficacy sources (Mwesigwa et al., 2020; Opolot, Simiyu, et al., 2024). Consequently, the absence of dimensional-level evidence limits both theoretical clarity and practical relevance, making it difficult for institutions to design interventions that target the most influential drivers of commitment.

This omission is particularly consequential in African higher education, where structural constraints amplify the role of psychological enablers. While Zaidi (2022) examined SE dimensions among Pakistani teachers, the findings lack generalisability to university settings, especially in public institutions operating under resource scarcity. Moreover, no known study has tested whether all four SE dimensions independently predict OC among academic staff in Ugandan universities, a context characterised by high workloads, limited professional development opportunities, and hierarchical organisational cultures that may differentially activate or suppress specific efficacy sources (Ahmed et al., 2024). In contrast to prior studies that collapse SE into a single aggregated score (Akhtar et al., 2013; Busch et al., 1998; Van Vuuren et al., 2008), the present study advances a multidimensional analytical perspective. By disaggregating SE into its four theoretical components (Bandura, 1986; 1999), this research offers a more refined exploration of how each source contributes to organisational commitment in academic settings. Such a differentiated approach is largely absent from studies in sub-Saharan Africa, where empirical work on SE has either focused on non-academic sectors (Hameli & Ordun, 2022; Soomro et al., 2024) or teacher populations outside the university context (Zaidi, 2022). By examining the distinct predictive effects of each SE dimension, this study provides context-sensitive insights that extend SCT applications beyond Western and corporate environments, addressing a critical gap in Ugandan higher education research.

Addressing this gap is not merely an academic exercise; it carries direct practical implications. If, for example, verbal persuasion exerts a stronger influence than vicarious learning, universities can prioritise structured feedback and recognition systems over generic mentoring programmes. Conversely, if physiological arousal (stress, burnout) significantly undermines commitment, wellness, and workload interventions become urgent priorities. Such precision is vital in resource-constrained environments where every intervention must yield maximum impact. Clarifying the unique contribution of each SE dimension also carries immediate practical implications for Ugandan universities. If verbal persuasion is found to be particularly influential, institutions can prioritise structured performance feedback, recognition systems, and supportive supervision practices (Alaqla, 2020; De Nobile & Bilgin, 2022). Where enactive mastery emerges as a strong predictor, targeted professional development, teaching enhancement programmes, and opportunities for skill-building may help reinforce commitment (Al-Qadri et al., 2024; Kasowe & Dambudzo, 2016). Similarly, if vicarious learning plays a significant role, universities may benefit from formal mentorship and peer-modelling initiatives aligned with resource constraints typical of Ugandan

public institutions (Opolot, Lagat, et al., 2024). Finally, where physiological arousal undermines commitment, addressing stress, workload imbalances, and emotional fatigue becomes essential for promoting staff well-being (Mwesigwa et al., 2020).

Guided by these gaps and the contextual realities of Ugandan higher education, this study examines how the four dimensions of self-efficacy, such as enactive mastery, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal (Bandura, 1986, 1999), independently predict organisational commitment among academic staff in public and private universities. By disaggregating self-efficacy and testing its dimensional structure in an underrepresented Global South context, the study extends prior work that has largely conceptualised SE as a unidimensional construct (Hameli & Ordun, 2022; Soomro et al., 2024), and advances SCT beyond Western and corporate settings. In doing so, it offers empirically grounded, context-sensitive insights that can inform targeted strategies for strengthening faculty retention and institutional stability in African higher education.

Literature review and hypotheses development

Theoretical foundation

This study draws on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1986), which conceptualises human behaviour as shaped by the reciprocal interaction of personal cognition, environmental influences, and behavioural outcomes (Twumasi et al., 2026). A central construct within SCT is self-efficacy, defined as individuals' beliefs in their capability to organise and execute actions required to achieve desired results. Crucially, Bandura argues that self-efficacy develops from four distinct sources of enactive mastery, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal, each contributing uniquely to how individuals evaluate their competence (Ahmed, 2017). Despite this multidimensional foundation, most organisational and educational studies continue to treat self-efficacy as a global, unidimensional construct. This approach simplifies measurement but obscures the differential mechanisms through which efficacy beliefs influence workplace attitudes such as organisational commitment (OC). Consequently, existing research can confirm that "self-efficacy matters," yet it cannot determine which specific efficacy sources matter most, under what conditions, and why. This limitation is particularly relevant in higher education contexts characterised by workload pressure, limited institutional support, and variable leadership practices, conditions that may heighten the salience of some efficacy sources over others (Miao et al., 2025).

A small body of emerging literature has begun investigating the separate dimensions of self-efficacy; however, these studies have been conducted primarily in Western, corporate, or non-university settings (Fayaz & Gulzar, 2025). Their findings are therefore not easily transferable to academic environments in sub-Saharan Africa, where structural constraints, resource scarcity, and cultural expectations shape faculty experiences differently. As a result, the field lacks evidence on whether Bandura's four efficacy sources operate similarly in African universities, where organisational challenges are more acute and where OC is increasingly essential for educational quality, retention, and institutional continuity. This study addresses this theoretical gap by applying SCT through a disaggregated, dimension-level lens. Instead of collapsing self-efficacy into a global measure, we examine how each source of mastery experience, observational learning, supportive feedback, and emotional/physical states uniquely predict OC among academic staff in Ugandan universities. This approach provides a more nuanced theoretical understanding of how self-beliefs shape commitment in educational spaces, especially those operating under resource constraints. By integrating the multidimensional structure of self-efficacy into the study of OC within African higher education, the research advances SCT's applicability and contributes a more context-sensitive explanation of educators' organisational attachment.

Self-efficacy and organisational commitment

Organizations need a clear self-efficacy approach across all operations to maximize employees' emotional attachment and contributions. According to Hameli and Ordun (2022), ideal self-efficacy emerges from four interrelated components of personal success: modeling others, verbal reinforcement, and

interpretation of somatic and emotional cues. These help individuals respond effectively to environmental demands. Theoretical insights suggest that cultivating these aspects of self-efficacy allows academic staff to better manage deficiencies in organisational commitment (Hameli & Ordun, 2022). Primarily, self-efficacy is essential for work motivation and forms the basis for strong organizational commitment. Practically, SE influences staff behavior and emotions in pursuit of organizational excellence and enhances their competitive edge over competitors (Chigeda et al., 2022). Usually, committed educators go beyond job requirements, align with and deeply understand their organization's goals and values (Rubel et al., 2021). Based on the current literature, it appears that the relationship between self-efficacy sources (including past successes, observing others, motivational feedback, and bodily or emotional cues) and organisational commitment remains unexplored in the context of universities (Al-Qadri et al., 2024). Studies such as those of Gao (2022); Syabarrudin et al. (2020); Uppathampracha and Liu (2022) found self-efficacy to be associated with OC.

Although studies such as Gao (2022), Syabarrudin et al. (2020), and Uppathampracha and Liu (2022) consistently link self-efficacy with organisational commitment, their focus rarely extends to contextual variations that may alter how self-efficacy manifests among academic staff. Al-Qadri et al. (2024) emphasize this oversight by noting the absence of sector-specific examinations, particularly in university settings where autonomy, academic identity, and performance pressures interact uniquely. By situating the inquiry within Ugandan public universities, institutions characterized by high workloads, limited resources, and evolving organisational demands, this study offers an opportunity to test whether the established global patterns hold or whether certain dimensions of self-efficacy operate more strongly in contexts marked by structural constraints. While the existing literature affirms that self-efficacy strengthens work motivation and fosters organisational commitment (Chigeda et al., 2022; Hameli & Ordun, 2022; Rubel et al., 2021), much of this scholarship treats self-efficacy as a single, unified construct rather than a multidimensional phenomenon. As a result, studies tend to generalize their effects without interrogating whether different sources, such as mastery experience, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, or physiological cues, shape commitment in distinct ways. This gap becomes more pronounced in African academic contexts, where organizational cultures, resource constraints, and role expectations differ from those in Western settings. Therefore, by applying a multidimensional analysis to Ugandan universities, this study not only consolidates existing evidence but also extends current debates by testing whether these global self-efficacy mechanisms operate similarly in under-researched higher-education environments. This is based on the idea that when university educators feel capable of executing specific tasks effectively, they tend to develop a stronger emotional attachment to their roles. In this research, we examine whether self-efficacy influences organisational commitment by proposing the following hypothesis:

H1: Self-efficacy has a positive influence on organizational commitment.

Furthermore, we extend this study by introducing an important aspect of dimensionality to the analysis. We contend that the way in which different types of self-efficacy influence organisational attachment is not the same for all staff members, as there is limited research validating a universal pattern (Santiago-Torner, 2024). Therefore, we investigate whether variations in organisational commitment among Ugandan university lecturers can be explained by differing levels of enactive mastery, vicarious learning, verbal encouragement, and physiological responses. According to SCT, enactive mastery, also referred to as mastery experience, arises from direct engagement or hands-on practice (El-Abd & Chaaban, 2021). It is widely regarded as the most impactful source of self-efficacy, rooted in individual accomplishments (Wilson et al., 2020). Within this study, educators' mastery perceptions stem from evaluations of previous performance and task completion (Blaique et al., 2023). By setting and achieving realistic goals, academic professionals build confidence in their capabilities. Bandura et al. (1999) notes that successful performance in teaching, research, and service enhances educators' expectations of future success. Conversely, failure in these areas may reduce perceived efficacy unless individuals identify strategies for improvement within those setbacks (Abraham et al., 2026). As highlighted by Hampel et al. (2024), enactive mastery significantly boosts employee commitment when adopting new technologies (Kasowe & Dambudzo, 2016). In the Ugandan university context, mastery experiences may carry even

greater importance due to persistent challenges such as large class sizes, limited teaching infrastructure, and high administrative workloads. These realities mean that successful performance is often achieved under significant constraints, making mastery experiences particularly potent in shaping lecturers' confidence and attachment to their institutions. As Bandura et al. (1999) and Abraham et al. (2026) suggest, mastery becomes a stabilizing force where structural support is limited. Thus, examining enactive mastery in Uganda provides insight into whether it serves as a compensatory mechanism that reinforces commitment despite environmental challenges.

Vicarious experiences, also known as social learning, involve observing others' successes and failures, which influences one's own beliefs about what is possible for them (Bandura, 1986). In universities, lecturers often model their behavior on peers who demonstrate commitment and excellence in teaching, research, or leadership. Naturally, human beings are competitive in nature, tend to observe, imitate, and replicate their role models. These observations serve as a source of information and learning about what it means to be committed to the institution. Academic staff may witness their colleagues' dedication, engagement, and positive experiences, which can serve as a model for their own behavior and attitudes. For example, teaching assistants observing senior colleagues receiving recognition for scholarly work may feel motivated to pursue similar achievements, increasing their attachment to the institution. This aspect fosters normative commitment by encouraging individuals to remain with the organisation due to their alignment with its core values and operational practices. Research suggests that vicarious learning fosters professional identity and group cohesion, both of which are important for long-term engagement in academic settings (Dignath et al., 2022). The influence of vicarious experiences may also assume heightened relevance in collectivist or community-oriented cultures such as Uganda's, where social learning, observation, and emulation play a central role in professional life. Bandura's (1986) proposition that individuals model behaviour based on credible role models gains contextual significance in universities where mentorship, informal peer learning, and departmental norms strongly influence academic identity. By unpacking this dimension, the study provides a culturally grounded understanding of how observational learning contributes to organisational commitment within East African higher education environments.

Verbal persuasion consists of supportive feedback from mentors or team members that boosts someone's conviction in their ability to succeed (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, organizational commitment develops from an employee's interactions with the organization, coworkers, supervisors, and external stakeholders (Hngoi et al., 2022). In academic environments, feedback from department heads, deans, or even students can shape how confident lecturers feel about their roles. For instance, positive feedback from a departmental head after a successful class observation can boost a lecturer's motivation and emotional connection to the institution (El-Abd & Chaaban, 2021). We argue that feedback is most effective when lecturers trust in their ability to apply it meaningfully. As a form of verbal persuasion, constructive feedback enhances OC by reinforcing lecturers' confidence and motivating them to align with institutional goals (Adams et al., 2020). Consistent validation and support help academic professionals build a stronger sense of identity and significance, ultimately strengthening their affective bond with the organisation (Osei et al., 2017). Despite existing evidence that feedback and verbal persuasion encourage stronger organisational commitment (Adams et al., 2020; Hngoi et al., 2022), few studies have evaluated how variation in feedback quality or institutional communication cultures affects commitment outcomes across universities. Ugandan institutions, where performance evaluations, mentoring structures, and leadership communication patterns differ widely across faculties, offer an important empirical setting for testing this dimension. This study, therefore, adds value by determining whether verbal persuasion plays a uniformly positive role or whether its impact varies according to institutional context and the nature of professional relationships.

Physiological arousal, as defined by Bandura et al. (1999), pertains to the emotional condition a person experiences during the performance of a given activity. In a typical workplace, employees find themselves faced with both positive and negative feelings that are likely to enhance or undermine their commitment (Morris et al., 2017). Uplifting emotions like excitement and self-assurance contribute to higher levels of self-efficacy, while distressing feelings such as tension, worry, or exhaustion have the opposite effect. These adverse sensations may serve as internal cues indicating insufficient preparedness, which can weaken commitment to the university (Blaique & Pinnington, 2022). To improve on lecturers'

cognitive lens for greater commitment, universities should prioritize the development of supportive environments, such as flexible schedules, wellness programs, or mental health resources (Aryati, 2023). This dimension highlights the importance of wellness and resilience-building in sustaining long-term affiliation with the organization. Physiological arousal has been theorized as a determinant of self-efficacy (Bandura et al., 1999; Morris et al., 2017), yet its organisational implications remain largely under-explored, especially within African university environments. Given that Ugandan lecturers often work under conditions of resource scarcity, high student-staff ratios, and emotional strain, examining physiological responses provides insight into how stress, fatigue, and emotional regulation shape commitment behaviours. This dimension strengthens the novelty of the present research by illustrating that applying a multidimensional lens uncovers context-specific mechanisms that remain invisible in studies conducted in more structurally supported environments. Thus, we hypothesize as follows:

H2: Enactive mastery has a positive effect on organizational commitment

H3: Vicarious experiences have a positive effect on organizational commitment

H4: Verbal persuasion has a positive effect on organizational commitment

H5: Physiological arousal has a positive effect on organizational commitment

Methodology

Research design

The research utilised a cross-sectional survey method to explore how various aspects of self-efficacy shape organisational commitment among university lecturers in Uganda. A quantitative approach was selected to gather measurable data and statistically analyse the relationships between key variables. This design enabled the researchers to capture respondents' attitudes at a specific moment, aligning with the study's goal of assessing whether self-efficacy dimensions serve as significant predictors of organisational commitment.

Population and sampling

Participants were drawn from a pool of 4,192 educators employed at eight Ugandan tertiary institutions, including four state-funded and four privately run universities, chosen based on evidence of declining workforce loyalty, which was based on documented evidence from national labour statistics, institutional human resource reports, and prior empirical studies highlighting trends of academic staff turnover, reduced organisational commitment, and increased mobility within Ugandan higher education (Muyiggwa & Kiyingi, 2022; Mwesiigwa et al., 2020; UBOS, 2018). These sources consistently point to challenges such as low retention rates, frequent job transitions, and declining institutional attachment among academic staff. Universities included in this study were therefore selected based on their representation in these reports and studies, as well as their alignment with observable indicators such as staff attrition trends and reported dissatisfaction levels. This criterion ensured that the selected institutions provided a relevant context for examining the relationship between self-efficacy and organisational commitment.

To ensure representativeness and capture institutional diversity, the sample was stratified by university type (Ahmed, 2024). This stratification accounted for the distinct governance, resource allocation, and operational contexts typically associated with public and private universities, which can influence faculty experiences and attitudes (Mendes et al., 2025). Using Yamane's (1967) formula, a representative sample size of 878 respondents was determined. Stratified random sampling was then implemented by dividing the total academic personnel into the two strata based on university type. From each stratum, participants were randomly selected proportionally to their population size within each stratum, ensuring balanced representation of both university types. This approach reduced sampling bias and enhanced the generalizability of findings across institutional categories. From the administered surveys,

574 valid responses were collected, yielding an effective return of 65.5%, which aligns with acceptable benchmarks in social research (Anseel et al., 2010).

Data instrument

A researcher-developed instrument, adapted from existing validated tools, was used to gather responses. Participants rated their experiences on a 7-category scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement and 7 indicated full agreement. The survey measured the independent construct of self-efficacy, which was broken into mastered experiences, observational learning, verbal reinforcement, and bodily/emotional indicators, as well as the dependent construct of OC. Minor contextual refinements were applied to ensure relevance within the Ugandan university setting, where “Organisation,” “employees,” and “supervisors” were replaced with “university,” “academic staff,” and “departmental heads” to align with higher education terminology (Berkovich, 2025). Generic work tasks were supplemented with academic examples like teaching, research, supervision, and community engagement, while maintaining the original meaning. No structural changes were made to measurement items, preserving their psychometric integrity. These modifications were validated by four experts in organizational psychology and higher education to ensure content validity (Guillot-Valdés et al., 2022).

Measurement of variables

We employed established and validated instruments in our study. Self-efficacy was assessed using four well-supported dimensions—personal achievement, motivational feedback, observational learning, and emotional or physical cues based on the work of Bandura (2001) and further supported by Haddad and Taleb (2016). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed a good model fit in the Ugandan context (explained variance = 75.38%, $\chi^2/\text{df} = 1.077$, RMSEA = 0.012, CFI = 0.967), and internal consistency was acceptable with enactive mastery ($\alpha = 0.806$), vicarious experiences ($\alpha = 0.794$), verbal persuasion ($\alpha = 0.827$), and physiological arousal ($\alpha = 0.786$). Organizational commitment was measured using 19 items from Meyer and Allen (1997), which also demonstrated satisfactory fit (explained variance = 65.5%, $\chi^2/\text{df} = 1.146$, RMSEA = 0.016, CFI = 0.999) and reliability ($\alpha = 0.881$). In a similar vein, gender, age, educational level, and academic rank were incorporated as control variables due to existing documented effects on OC (Dube & Ndofirepi, 2024; Opolot, Lagat, et al., 2024).

Data analysis

All quantitative data were entered and analysed using SPSS version 27. Preliminary analyses involved computing descriptive statistics, screening for missing data, and examining bivariate correlations. A hierarchical regression approach was employed to test the study’s propositions, consistent with methodological guidance from Field (2013) and Aiken and West (1991). This method assesses the incremental explanatory power of distinct predictor sets aligned with the study’s SCT-driven framework. For analytical transparency, predictors were entered in theoretical blocks: Demographics (age, gender, academic rank, qualification) were entered first (Block 1) to control for their influence on OC, given their role in commitment research. Each self-efficacy dimension was entered in subsequent blocks (2–5) to evaluate its unique contribution to OC beyond demographics and other dimensions. This ordering aims to isolate the distinct predictive value of each self-efficacy source in Ugandan higher education.

Common method variance

The potential influence of common method variance (CMV) was considered since we drew data using self-reported questionnaires that are highly susceptible to bias (Bozionelos & Simmering, 2022). While we took care to mitigate against CMV before data collection via procedural safeguards such as anonymity, simplified wording, and counterbalancing the order of questioning, the CMV impact is hard to eradicate completely (Tehseen et al., 2017). To counteract this, statistical Harman’s single-factor test was taken during analysis, revealing that a single factor captured only 19.995% of the variance, well below

the 50% threshold commonly cited as indicative of serious CMV (Saxena et al., 2024). This result suggests that our data isn't contaminated by CMV.

Demographic characteristics

Background information was recorded from academic professionals who contributed to the research, offering a demographic overview. The data encompassed gender, age, educational qualifications, and academic rank. Female participants represented 36.1% of the sample, while 63.9% were male. In relation to age, 9.4% were younger than 30, 45.3% were aged 31–40, and 33.6% fell within the 41–50 range. Only 1.2% were between 51 and 60, while 10.5% were 60 or older. The participants had different levels of education: over half had a master's degree (55.6%), more than a third had a PhD (34.7%), and a small group had a bachelor's degree (9.8%). Most worked as Lecturers (42.9%) or Assistant Lecturers (22.3%). There were also Senior Lecturers (13.6%) and Teaching Assistants (12.9%). At the top levels, Associate Professors were 5.9% and Professors were just 2.4%.

Descriptive and correlation analysis results

In Table 1, we present descriptive and correlation results. From Table 1, the descriptive statistics indicate that OC ($M = 5.435$, $SD = 0.719$) and all four self-efficacy dimensions achieved relatively high mean scores. This reflects that academic staff generally perceive themselves as confident in their professional capabilities and moderately committed to their institutions. Enactive mastery ($M = 5.814$, $SD = 0.709$) and physiological arousal ($M = 6.062$, $SD = 0.729$) recorded the highest means, suggesting that lecturers feel successful in their academic roles and experience positive emotional states in their work environments. On the other hand, vicarious experience ($M = 4.963$, $SD = 0.689$) was comparatively lower, indicating that opportunities for observational learning, such as mentorship or modelling from senior colleagues, may be less available in Ugandan universities. This pattern aligns with the findings of Kusemererwa et al. (2020), who noted that many aspects of learning behavior among Ugandan youth are not uniformly developed, with resource-related limitations possibly constraining certain characteristics more than others.

Despite these differences in mean levels, the correlations reveal that each self-efficacy dimension is positively linked to OC, supporting SCT's proposition that confidence beliefs enhance persistence and attachment. Statistically significant positive correlations were found between organizational commitment and self-efficacy overall ($r = 0.321$, $p < 0.01$) and its specific dimensions: enactive mastery ($r = 0.219$), vicarious experience ($r = 0.201$, $p < 0.01$), verbal persuasion ($r = 0.264$, $p < 0.01$), and physiological arousal ($r = 0.246$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, the sub-dimensions of self-efficacy demonstrated strong inter-correlations, underscoring the multidimensional nature of efficacy beliefs among the participants. These findings support the hypothesized positive association between self-efficacy sources and organizational commitment in the higher education context. However, as noted in Kusemererwa et al. (2020) study, univariate interpretations can be misleading without considering other factors, so the analysis was extended to a multivariate framework. Before performing regressions, we examined the correlations among the independent variables to assess potential multicollinearity.

Although some dimensions were moderately correlated, particularly vicarious experience and overall self-efficacy, the coefficients remained well below the critical thresholds of 0.80 or 0.90 recommended by Field, (2009). This suggests that the dimensions are conceptually related but empirically distinct, consistent with the multidimensional structures reported by Kusemererwa et al. (2020). Since moderate correlations can still obscure multicollinearity (Myers, 1990), we further evaluated VIF and tolerance values. All VIFs were comfortably below 10, and all tolerance values exceeded the recommended 0.10 benchmark (Hair et al., 2010), confirming that multicollinearity did not compromise the validity of the regression models. These results validate the multivariate approach and confirm that each self-efficacy dimension can be legitimately analyzed for its unique contribution to organisational commitment.

Table 1. Descriptive and correlations.

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Organisational commit. (1)	5.435	0.719	1					
Self-efficacy (2)	5.216	0.896	0.321**	1				
Enactive Mastery (3)	5.814	0.709	0.219**	0.584**	1			
Vicarious Experience (4)	4.963	0.698	0.201**	0.814**	0.273**	1		
Verbal Persuasion (5)	5.691	0.862	0.264**	0.436**	0.175**	0.122**	1	
Physiological Arousal (6)	6.062	0.729	0.246**	0.431**	0.354**	0.144**	0.199**	1

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

Regression analysis results

Before regression testing, we examined pairwise associations between constructs and then proceeded with hierarchical regression to validate the hypothesized relationships (Kusemererwa et al., 2020). This method allowed us to isolate which components of self-efficacy have the strongest influence on organisational commitment. As noted by Field (2013) hierarchical regression is valuable for assessing how much each predictor accounts for shifts in the dependent variable and how subsequent predictors add predictive value. Initial regression findings supported the hypothesis (H1) that increased self-efficacy was associated with stronger organisational attachment. Specifically, self-efficacy accounted for roughly 13% as indicated by $R^2 = 0.129\%$ of the variability in commitment levels, lending further credibility to H1 (see results under Table 2).

It appears that the extent of organisational commitment is linked to levels of self-efficacy. As this concept consists of multiple underlying elements, a closer look was taken at how each contributes individually. Using a block-wise regression approach aligned with prior recommendations (Aiken & West, 1991), variables were introduced in stages to determine their cumulative impact. This technique enabled the evaluation of each predictor's added value after accounting for baseline influences. The initial model displayed in Table 3 features only control variables as baseline predictors.

The control variables included in the analysis did not significantly predict organisational commitment, suggesting that other factors may better explain variations in institutional loyalty. Hypothesis H2 was supported by the study, as enactive mastery, a sense of competence derived from personal achievement, showed a statistically significant and positive relationship with commitment. This indicates that individuals who have mastered relevant tasks are more likely to feel emotionally invested in the university. Additionally, Hypothesis H3 was also confirmed, with vicarious learning, which entails gaining confidence by observing others, positively influencing commitment levels. Moreover, Hypothesis H4 was supported, showing that verbal encouragement and motivational communication from colleagues or supervisors significantly influence commitment. Furthermore, Hypothesis H5 was also validated by the study, as physical and emotional cues were found to contribute meaningfully to organisational attachment.

Overall, these variables explain around 14.6% of the variance in organisational commitment among academic staff in Uganda. Model 5 (see Table 3) was identified as the most effective model, as it recorded the highest increase in R^2 , underscoring the importance of including all self-efficacy dimensions for enhanced predictive accuracy.

Discussion

The research examined how academic staff's perceived capability influences their attachment to the university. Evidence shows that self-efficacy significantly and positively predicts organizational commitment, thereby confirming H1. In higher education, staff who see themselves as capable are more likely to stay emotionally engaged, take initiative, and contribute positively to institutional goals. A strong sense of self-efficacy fosters persistence, proactive behavior, and emotional connection with the organization. To enhance analytical clarity, the discussion focuses on interpreting how each dimension of self-efficacy contributes uniquely to organisational commitment, rather than reiterating established theoretical foundations. This approach enables a more precise understanding of the empirical contributions of the study.

This finding coincides with Hameli et al. (2025); Uppathampracha and Liu (2022), who contend that high perceptions of self-efficacy boost levels of organisational commitment amongst employees.

Table 2. Variance inflation factors and tolerance values.

Variable name	Standardized coefficients		Collinearity statistics	
	β (beta)	p-value	Tolerance	VIF
Gender	−0.017	0.683	1.000	1.000
Age	0.072	0.085	1.000	1.000
Education	0.071	0.160	0.684	1.462
Academic Rank	−0.061	0.355	0.396	2.527
Enactive mastery	0.212	0.000	0.960	1.041
Vicarious experiences	0.166	0.000	0.887	1.128
Verbal persuasion	0.220	0.000	0.959	1.043
Physiological arousal	0.159	0.000	0.847	1.180
Durbin–Watson				1.695

Note. $R^2 = 0.129$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.121$, $F = 16.779$; $p = 0.000$; dependent variable: organizational commitment.

Table 3. Results for the study hypotheses.

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	β	p-value	β	p-value	β	p-value	β	p-value	β	p-value
Gender	−0.003	0.634	−0.028	0.501	−0.023	0.563	−0.025	0.526	−0.035	0.369
Age	0.005	0.337	0.064	0.235	0.077	0.151	0.075	0.150	0.074	0.153
Education	0.013	0.093	0.055	0.366	0.052	0.385	0.055	0.347	0.066	0.253
Rank	−0.004	0.355	−0.059	0.366	−0.034	0.602	−0.049	0.436	−0.058	0.353
EM			0.212***	0.000	0.163***	0.000	0.132**	0.002	0.081	0.068
VE					0.166***	0.000	0.145***	0.001	0.138***	0.001
VP							0.220***	0.000	0.198***	0.000
PA									0.159***	0.000
R^2	0.10		0.054		0.078		0.124		0.146	
ΔR^2	0.010		0.043		0.024		0.046		0.021	
F Change	1.495		25.904***		15.012***		30.043***		14.091***	

Note. EM = enactive mastery; VE = vicarious experience; VP = verbal persuasion; PA = physiological arousal.

** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Thus, universities operate in a highly dynamic environment that requires academic staff to possess more than just the necessary skills and competences to execute their job demands, but staff need to believe in their abilities to perform their tasks by embracing the high sensitivities of self-efficaciousness (Mokhtar et al., 2023). Those with strong self-efficacy respond to challenges with determination, while those with weaker self-efficacy may retreat from difficulty, as noted by Musenze et al. (2022). Key contributors to this dynamic include past achievements, exposure to successful role models, constructive feedback, and awareness of emotional and physical responses. While these findings support the principles of Social Cognitive Theory, they contrast with Kim and Kang (2015), who found no significant association. Despite this divergence, the evidence suggests that fostering self-efficacy can improve organisational outcomes. University leaders are encouraged to adopt multi-faceted approaches to cultivate confidence and resilience among teaching staff. While the finding that self-efficacy predicts organisational commitment aligns with earlier studies (Hameli et al., 2025; Mokhtar et al., 2023; Uppathampracha & Liu, 2022; Xie et al., 2024), the distinctive contribution of this research lies in demonstrating that each of Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy independently and positively predicts commitment within Ugandan universities. Prior research has often examined self-efficacy as a unidimensional construct, making it difficult to disentangle how specific mechanisms such as mastery, observation, feedback, or emotional states uniquely shape staff attachment. By presenting a differentiated analysis, this study advances the literature by showing that each dimension contributes uniquely across affective, normative, and continuance commitment. This multidimensional finding is particularly novel for the higher education context in Sub-Saharan Africa, where empirical validation of SCT's dimensional assumptions remains limited.

Hypothesis H2 explored the potential influence of enactive mastery on organisational commitment among university instructors. The results demonstrated a statistically significant and positive correlation, indicating that prior successes in carrying out responsibilities contribute to a stronger sense of self-worth and professional identity, which in turn fosters greater organisational loyalty. In this study, organisational commitment was operationalised along three lines: affective, normative, and continuance. The findings indicate that cultivating self-efficacy can meaningfully impact each type of commitment, particularly

within the context of Ugandan universities. When lecturers accumulate successful experiences, they develop a sense of emotional investment in the institution (affective). A heightened sense of obligation to contribute to institutional goals also supports normative commitment. Meanwhile, perceived professional worth and career stability increase the perceived cost of leaving, thereby reinforcing continuance commitment. To promote these forms of commitment, higher education institutions should offer opportunities for skill development, goal achievement, and recognition. An effective performance tracking mechanism can help identify progress and encourage continuous improvement among academic personnel.

These findings also reveal practical pathways through which universities can translate each source of self-efficacy into intentional staff development strategies. For example, mastery experiences can be enhanced through structured professional development programmes, opportunities for successful task completion, and recognition systems that validate academic achievements. Vicarious learning can be strengthened through mentorship arrangements, team teaching, peer observation schemes, and deliberate role-modelling by senior academics. Verbal persuasion may be operationalised through regular, constructive appraisal processes, transparent communication about expectations, and day-to-day positive reinforcement from leaders. Similarly, physiological arousal can be supported through wellness initiatives, workload balancing, mental health services, and flexible scheduling. Taken together, these targeted interventions demonstrate how the four sources of self-efficacy can be strategically leveraged to strengthen commitment, rather than functioning as abstract theoretical ideals.

The findings echo the works by Al-Zubaidi et al. (2022); Hampel et al. (2024) who avers that those individuals with vast enactive mastery and accumulated previous experiences perceive themselves as capable of meeting future demands and fulfilling their responsibilities effectively. This increased self-assurance translates into higher levels of OC, as individuals feel a sense of loyalty and attachment to the institution that has provided them with opportunities to succeed. Thus, past success in the same task builds enthusiasm and confidence while failure erodes it. Hence, organizations must provide opportunities for learning and practicing strategies that help facilitators perform their roles well (Blaique & Pinnington, 2022). The study hence extends the SCT (Bandura, 1983), which assumes that individuals rely on past experiences when making decisions. This heightened sense of self-efficacy influences the academic staff to stay with the mindset that previous successes can be replicated.

Hypothesis H3 explored whether learning through observation influences organisational commitment among lecturers in Ugandan universities. The data confirmed this relationship, indicating that when academic professionals see peers or mentors excel or manage difficulties successfully, it boosts their motivation and willingness to remain affiliated with the institution. Observational learning thus becomes a source of inspiration and confidence-building. Our study demonstrates that positive experiences from colleagues, mentors, and supervisors evoke positive emotions, admiration, and a sense of belonging (affective commitment). In addition, witnessing the dedication, loyalty, and ethical behavior of colleagues inspires normative commitment. Also, when academic staff observe the positive experiences and career growth opportunities of their colleagues, it can enhance their perceived job security and professional value, thereby increasing continuance commitment. By providing opportunities for individuals to learn from the experiences and successes of their peers, universities can foster a sense of pride, shared values, and a supportive professional environment. This, in turn, can strengthen commitment levels and enhance loyalty and dedication to the university.

These insights align with the existing literature of De Nobile and Bilgin (2022); El-Abd and Chaaban (2021); Yoon et al. (2018), who found that vicarious experiences significantly enhance employees' OC. In this study, OC among lecturers appears to be influenced by positive vicarious learning from individuals whom academic staff view as role models. Observing others succeed or overcome challenges reassures staff that they too can achieve their goals, especially when the role model is someone relatable. For example, seeing supportive interactions among colleagues increases OC by reinforcing a sense of belonging and shared purpose. Likewise, guided learning through role modeling helps speed up task completion by breaking complex duties into manageable steps. This kind of observational learning allows lecturers to reflect on and improve their self-efficacy beliefs, which in turn strengthens their commitment to the institution. Additionally, Adebayo (2006) found that in restructured organizations, mentors and restructuring champions played a key role in boosting employee confidence and encouraging

long-term retention. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, novice teachers showed greater school commitment when mentored by experienced educators (Kasowe & Dambudzo, 2016). El-Abd and Chaaban (2021) noted that even negative vicarious experiences, such as observing poor teaching practices, offer valuable lessons by highlighting what not to do in the classroom. These experiences can still enhance self-efficacy and professional commitment through reflection and improved readiness.

This research supports SCT, which suggests that vicarious experiences positively influence organizational commitment by offering opportunities for observational learning and shaping expectations about successful outcomes. Academic staff who observe committed colleagues or strong leaders are more likely to internalize those behaviors and develop a stronger emotional attachment to their institutions. As a result, they demonstrate higher levels of commitment to the university. The study confirms that having role models within the workplace, especially in Ugandan universities, can serve as a precursor to building facilitators' commitment. Observing and comparing oneself with others plays a critical role in shaping how academic staff perceive their own potential and future within the organization. While our results converge with De Nobile and Bilgin (2022), El-Abd and Chaaban (2021), and Yoon et al. (2018) in showing positive effects of vicarious learning and feedback, they diverge from Kim and Kang (2015), who found no significant association between self-efficacy and commitment. These inconsistencies may reflect contextual differences such as variations in organisational culture, levels of institutional support, or the degree of autonomy afforded to academic staff. Ugandan universities often operate with heavier workloads, fewer teaching resources, and stronger reliance on interpersonal networks, all of which may heighten the influence of mastery, modelling, and supportive communication. This contrast underscores the importance of understanding how cultural and institutional contexts shape the potency of self-efficacy mechanisms, thereby broadening the scope of SCT.

Hypothesis H4 examined the impact of verbal persuasion on organisational commitment within Ugandan universities. The findings validated this relationship, showing that regular expressions of appreciation, motivation, and supportive communication from colleagues or superiors significantly influence staff loyalty. The research highlights that those institutions fostering a culture of appreciation through affirming words, acknowledgment of effort, and motivational support are better positioned to cultivate pride and institutional attachment. When educators feel valued and emotionally supported by peers or supervisors, they tend to develop stronger affective commitment. Similarly, messages reinforcing the importance of their contributions help strengthen normative commitment by aligning personal values with organisational goals. Additionally, institutions that communicate clear career development opportunities and workplace stability influence how staff perceive the value of remaining employed, thereby shaping continuance commitment. These insights suggest that creating a positive communication environment can directly boost affective and normative engagement while indirectly influencing continuance commitment through perceptions of job security and growth potential.

These findings augur well with those of Chen et al. (2019); Haque et al. (2024), who found that verbal reinforcement significantly boosts confidence and retention intentions. The authors argue that in Ugandan universities, supervisors, managers, and peers who routinely encourage their staff or colleagues to persevere and execute the tasks boost their sense of self-efficacy and desire to stay within the institution. It is also imperative that universities make it a priority to give constructive performance feedback daily. This is also supported by Adebayo (2006), who revealed that offering survivors a sense of control through involvement in job redesigns, temporary projects, and supportive communication boosts their confidence and commitment to the organization. These actions are pertinent for building a recognition culture that boosts the confidence required in maintaining a stable staff OC. The findings extend the SCT, which assumes that verbal persuasion influences organizational commitment by exerting social influence and shaping individuals' self-efficacy beliefs. When academic staff receive persuasive messages that emphasize their commitment and capabilities, it influences their beliefs about their own abilities and fosters a stronger commitment to the university. Verbal persuasion serves as a motivating factor and helps individuals maintain their commitment and engagement in their work. As such, verbal persuasion is a key predictor of organisational commitment.

As for H5, our findings support the view that lecturers' emotional and physical state, such as happiness, stress levels, and well-being, have a meaningful influence on their OC. Within this study, higher education institutions that foster positive emotional and physical conditions help lecturers develop a

stronger sense of self-efficacy and organisational identification, ultimately increasing their willingness to stay engaged and contribute meaningfully. For example, lecturers who receive mental health support, an equitable workload, or flexible working conditions are more likely to stay and contribute long-term. In contrast, lecturers experiencing unclear career progression paths, stress, heavy workload, or poor work-life balance may feel overwhelmed, leading to reduced motivation and emotional attachment to the university. As such, they begin to question whether staying is worth the toll on their health. These findings resonate with research from other contexts. Lim et al. (2020) found that high stress levels impeded staff health, performance, and commitment to their companies, while Yalçın et al. (2021) noted that academicians with better psychological regulation reported stronger identification with their universities. This implies that universities should invest in wellness programs, workload management policies, and mental health support systems to promote physiological arousal associated with positive experiences, if they are to foster stronger commitment. Although all four self-efficacy dimensions significantly predicted organisational commitment, their combined explanatory power was modest. This suggests that while self-efficacy is influential, it is not the sole determinant of staff attachment in Ugandan universities. These findings further suggest that self-efficacy operates alongside other organisational dynamics. In particular, leadership practices, institutional support mechanisms, and organisational climate may interact with self-efficacy to shape commitment outcomes. For instance, supportive leadership and conducive work environments may amplify the effects of self-efficacy, while weak institutional systems may constrain its influence. Integrating these contextual factors provides a more holistic explanation of organisational commitment within higher education effects (Kuuyelleh et al., 2025; Mujajati et al., 2024; Opolot et al., 2026; Tolossa, 2024). Acknowledging this limitation provides a foundation for future research to incorporate broader organisational variables to create a more holistic understanding of commitment formation within higher education institutions.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings suggest that Social Cognitive Theory may benefit from context-sensitive refinement when applied in non-Western higher education environments. The differentiated effects of the four self-efficacy dimensions indicate that SCT's mechanisms may not operate uniformly across cultural or institutional contexts. For instance, vicarious learning and verbal persuasion appeared particularly powerful in the Ugandan setting, possibly due to collectivist norms and the centrality of interpersonal relationships in academic work. These insights contribute to extending SCT by demonstrating that its core propositions hold, but with contextual variations in magnitude and influence, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of how self-efficacy shapes organisational behaviour in developing country settings.

Conclusion

This study set out to address a notable knowledge gap concerning the limited empirical understanding of how self-efficacy shapes organisational commitment in universities within developing contexts, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa. Much of the existing scholarship has examined self-efficacy either as a generalised construct or within Western and corporate environments, leaving higher education institutions in Uganda largely overlooked. By applying Bandura's multidimensional framework, this research provides a comprehensive assessment of the unique contributions of enactive mastery, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal to organisational commitment among academic staff.

The study confirms that self-efficacy is a significant predictor of commitment; however, the distinctive contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that all four dimensions independently and positively influence affective, normative, and continuance commitment. This multidimensional evidence moves beyond the assumptions of prior unidimensional studies by showing that each mechanism of self-efficacy plays a meaningful and context-specific role in shaping staff attachment. These insights indicate that strengthening academic staff commitment requires institutions to cultivate not only competence but also modelling opportunities, supportive feedback cultures, and emotionally enabling work environments.

By clarifying how different aspects of self-efficacy contribute to organisational commitment in Ugandan universities, the study provides practical guidance for higher education leaders in similar developing contexts and underscores the importance of designing interventions that address all four

dimensions. More broadly, the findings contribute to global higher education research by demonstrating that Social Cognitive Theory operates in nuanced ways across cultural and institutional settings, highlighting the value of context-sensitive approaches when examining staff attitudes and behaviour internationally.

Implications

Theoretical implications

In light of the study findings, future academicians could draw significant theoretical lessons in their attempt to extend their studies. Firstly, this study extends the application of the social cognitive theory towards improving organisational commitment. According to this theory, staff evaluation of their personal capabilities leads to higher positive organisational commitment. Specifically, when academic staff with high perceptions of their abilities are more likely to expend their effort and remain tenacious in the face of obstacles to succeed. In addition, staff feel committed to the university to fulfill their job responsibilities, contribute to the organization, and overcome challenges, leading to higher levels of commitment. This study emphasized that self-efficacy significantly improves organisational commitment. Secondly, this study reveals that the four self-efficacy dimensions substantially influence organisational commitment. Our empirical results show that all dimensions of self-efficacy (enactive mastery, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal) have direct and positive effects on organisational commitment. The finding validates the view that the development of organisational commitment is largely contingent on self-efficacy attributes, hence highlighting the need for managers to build an environment that enhances academic staff's self-efficacy.

Practical implications

The findings provide several practical implications for strengthening academic staff motivation, performance, and retention within Ugandan universities. Rather than managing persistent disengagement, institutions can cultivate a committed academic workforce by intentionally supporting the four self-efficacy dimensions: mastery experiences, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, and emotional regulation. Universities can begin by enhancing training and development initiatives that build staff capabilities and confidence. Structured opportunities for skill-building, coaching, and professional growth empower lecturers to perform effectively and reinforce their sense of belonging to the institution.

In the Ugandan public university context, these efforts should build on existing mentorship arrangements such as senior–junior academic pairings, supervision committees, and departmental teaching teams, and align with national higher education priorities outlined in the National Development Plan. Formalising mentorship responsibilities, allocating time for peer-learning sessions, and integrating mentorship into promotion and appraisal systems can strengthen both mastery and vicarious learning. This ensures that self-efficacy development remains consistent with Uganda's broader goals of improving lecturer competence, research productivity, and teaching quality.

Academic supervisors also play a crucial role through verbal persuasion. Setting clear goals, offering constructive and regular feedback, and reinforcing positive behaviour can help staff develop a stronger sense of competence and purpose. A structured performance management system, one that tracks, evaluates, and reviews progress continuously, allows lecturers to reflect on both past successes and challenges, thereby strengthening their confidence and commitment over time.

Universities can further operationalise each source of self-efficacy through targeted interventions. Mastery can be enhanced through professional development cycles, recognition of achievements, and realistic goal-setting. Vicarious learning can be supported through peer observation programs, collaborative teaching, and role-modeling by high-performing lecturers. Verbal persuasion benefits from routine appraisal meetings, clear communication, and daily positive reinforcement. Physiological and emotional well-being can be strengthened through wellness programs, counselling services, workload redistribution, and flexible scheduling, particularly important in resource-constrained African academic environments.

Finally, creating a supportive work environment that values open communication, recognises achievements, and provides adequate resources is critical. When lecturers feel appreciated, supported, and emotionally secure, their self-efficacy increases, which in turn enhances their affective and normative commitment to the university. These practical steps collectively demonstrate how universities—especially in developing contexts—can convert self-efficacy insights into meaningful organisational strategies for long-term staff engagement and retention.

Limitations

This study's findings and conclusions should be treated with caution. Given that the present study attempted to find the impact of self-efficacy forms on organisational commitment based on perceptions, this could have led to the current results. For more nuanced findings, it would be beneficial to undertake a similar study in a different context with a qualitative design that better captures the psychological responses to the variables of interest based on a real-life narrative. The study sample was not adequately representative of all the academic staff of Ugandan universities, as it was limited to only four private and four public universities in Uganda. A key recommendation for follow-up research is the inclusion of a more comprehensive and demographically varied university sample. This would strengthen the validity and transferability of the findings. Moreover, the exclusive use of self-reported measures from faculty members introduces a potential threat to construct validity due to common method variance.

In addition to these limitations, several avenues for future research can deepen understanding of how self-efficacy shapes organisational commitment in higher education. First, longitudinal or mixed-method designs would allow scholars to capture the dynamic and evolving nature of commitment, offering insight into how self-efficacy sources influence attachment over time rather than at a single point. Second, comparative studies such as analyses of public versus private universities or cross-country comparisons within the East African region would help clarify how institutional structures and cultural contexts shape the strength of these relationships. Finally, future studies should expand beyond self-efficacy to explore additional predictors of organisational commitment, including leadership styles, institutional support systems, organisational climate, and career development opportunities. Incorporating these broader factors would produce a more holistic model and provide richer guidance for policy and practice in African higher education.

Author contributions

CRedit: **Julius Samuel Opolot**: Conceptualization, Investigation, Project administration, Resources, Writing – original draft; **Gabriel Simiyu**: Formal analysis, Methodology, Project administration, Software, Validation, Writing – review & editing; **Lydia Maket**: Conceptualization, Supervision, Visualization; **Mahadih Kyambade**: Data curation, Investigation, Validation; **Barbra Alungat**: Resources, Validation, Visualization; **Barnabas Muganzi**: Data curation, Investigation, Resources.

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Data availability

The data supporting this study may be obtained upon request from the corresponding author at  jsopolot@gmail.com.

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