

Effect of Staff Development Policy on Organizational Commitment of University Beneficiaries in Uganda

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of staff development policy on the organizational commitment of university beneficiaries in Uganda. The specific objectives were; (1) to determine the effect of financial training support on organizational commitment of university beneficiaries; (2) to analyze the relationship between promotion with compensation after training and organizational commitment of university beneficiaries; and (3) to examine the relationship between fund recovery from staff after training and organizational commitment of university beneficiaries. Results revealed that; (a) financial training support had a significant relationship with organizational commitment of university beneficiaries ($r = .979^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$); (b) promotion with compensation after training had a significant association with organizational commitment ($r = .964^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$); and (c) fund recovery procedure from staff after training had a significant relationship with organizational commitment ($r = .977^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$). Multiple regression results also revealed that among the three (3) variables studied, only two (2) variables have a significant and positive effect on organizational commitment of beneficiaries. These are; financial training support [$\beta = .767$, $t = 5.470$, $p < 0.0001$]; and fund recovery procedure [$\beta = .568$, $t = 4.607$, $p < 0.0001$]. The other variable of compensation with promotion has a significant but negative effect on organizational commitment [$\beta = -.349$, $t = -2.434$, $p < 0.018$] implying among others that while these two are significant aspects why staff go for training, in practice they negatively influence commitment because staff look for greener pastures elsewhere after training. It was therefore concluded that for universities to succeed in cultivating organizational commitment and performance, there is need to solicit for funds to enable staff development programmes to be sustainable and avoid undue stress on the beneficiaries.

Keywords: staff development, organizational commitment, compensation, financial training support

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1. Introduction

Quite often, Universities as centers of academic excellence have adopted and used staff development policies as mechanisms by which they can replenish retiring staff, build capacity and ensure survival amidst increasing competition. Excellent as it looks however, the commitment of those who go for further studies to return to their work has been elusive. This has been exacerbated by the present academic environment that has witnessed the growth of universities especially in Uganda from one to more than 50 (National Council for Higher education, 2018).

The study is about staff development policies and their effect on the overall organizational commitment of university beneficiaries in Uganda. Organizational commitment entails the obligation of the employee towards the employer for whom they are working (Silaban & Syah, 2018). According to Robbin (2008) there are three (3) forms of organizational commitment relevant to a university setting that is; (1) affective commitment which is the employee's emotional attachment to the university; (2) continuance commitment which is the employee's awareness of the costs associated with leaving the university; and (3) normative commitment which is the employee's obligation to remain in the university (Radosavljević, Čilerdžić, & Dragić, 2017).

Yousaf, et al. (2014) noted the challenge of workers' low commitment within industrialized states with Australia having up to 68% of the academic personnel indicate that they wished to leave higher education. Meanwhile, in South Africa, Pienaar and Bester (2008) observed that between 5% to 18% of staff depict subtle signs of low organizational commitment to their respective universities.

Universities in pursuit of their corporate goals hire both academic, non-academic and support staff from varied backgrounds with different personal aspirations. To ensure that critical human resources are equipped with the necessary skills that can make them consistently significant in the fulfillment of the tasks for which they are hired, universities just like any other organization in most cases provide development opportunities to their employees. Staff development is among the most important investments because it enhances the knowledge, skills, talents, attitudes and behaviour of employees. According to Ng'ethe (2014) university staff development is not simply a means of arming staff with the knowledge and skills they need to offer quality education, but rather a sign of Management's commitment to their work force. Therefore, if staff development is not strengthened, it may

pose a threat to employee organizational commitment.

Put it in another way, staff development can provide abilities, knowledge and skills that enhance individual performance and ultimately enhances staff organizational commitment. Unfortunately, there are many institutions such as Kyambogo University in Uganda whose management teams look at staff development as a useless cost (Kasule & Neema, 2015). However, if they want to remain competitive and survive and stand the test of time, all universities have no choice but to develop their employees because elsewhere in the world today e.g., in the USA according to Riccio (2010), there is a tremendous awareness about the talent management practices given that various universities on the continent offer staff developmental opportunities which move is critical to cultivating organizational commitment for staff.

Elsewhere in East Africa, Waswa and Katana (2008) reported that highly trained employees have left their jobs in Kenyan institutions of higher learning and secured better paying vacancies elsewhere. In Uganda, Kasule and Neema (2015) showed that public universities in Uganda have outdated and incoherent staff development policies which has proven a catalyst of poor performance of academic staff especially in the areas of teaching, research and community service which depicts low organizational commitment. On the same note, Edabu and Anumaka (2014) in their study of private universities in Uganda, noted neglected responsibilities at Kampala International University where some academic staff did not assess learners effectively and exhibited low pace of modernization of teaching and learning which are symptoms of low organizational commitment of staff.

In addition to the above, the research by Azabo Gaitte and Wunti (2017) regarding discipline of staff in 10 private chartered and accredited universities in Uganda indicated that staff are working as part-timers in other universities. This study was therefore premised on the assumption that the current staff development policies have significantly served as a medium through which institutions can nurture their employees after which they would serve humanity with the required quality, commitment and productivity. The specific objectives of this study were therefore to;

1. Identify the effect of financial training support on organizational commitment of university beneficiaries in Uganda;
2. Analyse the relationship between promotion with compensation after staff training and organizational commitment of university beneficiaries in Uganda; and
3. Examine the relationship between fund recovery from staff after training and organizational commitment of university beneficiaries in Uganda.

Consequently, the tested null hypotheses for this study were;

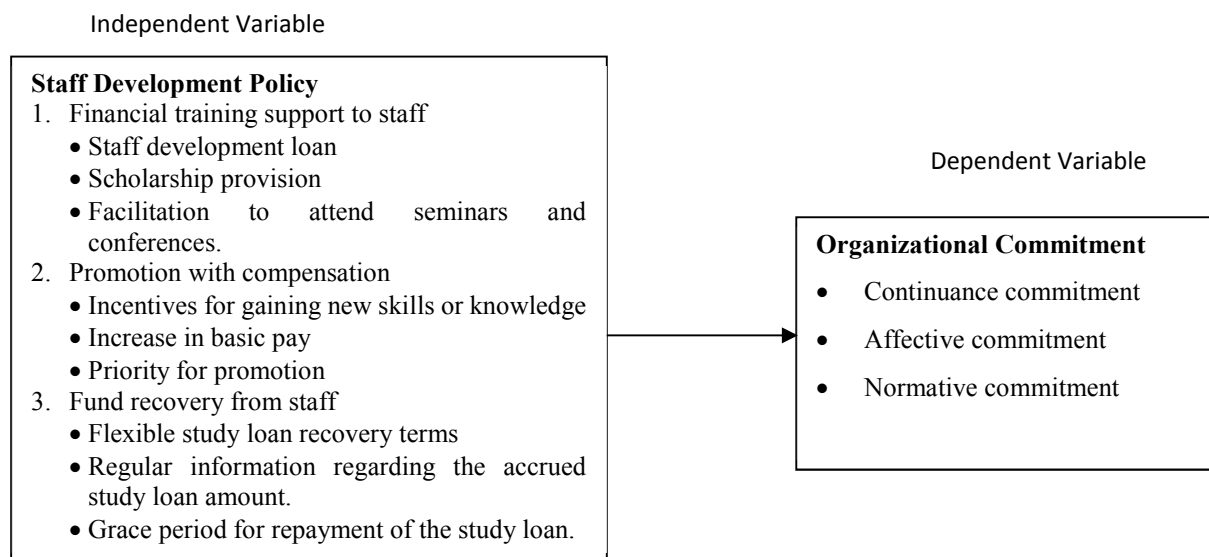
1. There is no significant effect of financial training support on organizational commitment of university beneficiaries in Uganda.
2. There is no significant relationship between promotion with compensation after staff training and organizational commitment of university beneficiaries in Uganda.
3. There is no significant relationship between fund recovery from staff after training and organizational commitment of university beneficiaries in Uganda.

This study is significant because according to Aguinis and Kraiger (2009), staff development is expected to have a significant positive effect on organizational commitment because of the focus by Management to provide employees with knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours related to their personal or professional growth. However, the study by Amina and Gada (2018) documented the notable signs of low organizational commitment at one of the oldest universities in Uganda in that staff regularity at work is gradually decreasing at the institution despite efforts by Management to have consistent meetings to rectify this anomaly. Yet according to the Staff Development Programme Report to Council (2018), it was revealed that a total of 180 beneficiaries were on record to have benefited from this university's staff development programme, but out of these, more than 10 had left for greener pastures with some choosing to apply for leave without pay and had not returned while others had resigned all together. All these are signs of declining commitment to the institution. However, according to the organizational commitment theory as reviewed by Kessler (2013), employees are said to be committed to their organization when their goals are congruent with those of the organization, when they are willing to exert efforts on behalf of the organization and when they desire to maintain their connection with the organization.

1. Conceptual Framework

In coming up with the conceptual framework of the study, staff development policy was considered as an independent variable and the variable organizational commitment of university beneficiaries was considered as the dependent variable as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



2. Literature review

Nawab and Bhatti (2011) did a study on the effect of compensation on organizational commitment among Pakistani university academic staff. A total of 270 questionnaires were sent to respondents through either email, postal mail, and physically. However, 224 usable questionnaires were received as email response rate was 88% and physical response was 100% while postal mail response rate was 68%. Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis results revealed that if institutions properly remunerate their staff, affective commitment of employees increases.

A study was conducted by Yego and Gichure (2020) on the effect of debt recovery policy on performance in large organizations Kitale Town, Kenya. This study adopted a descriptive research design and targeted 123 respondents from 10 organizations in Kitale Town. The study access population comprised 10 branch managers, 10 Operations Managers 20 supervisors and 83 staff working in selected organizations in Kitale. Research instruments of the study were Questionnaires. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and the multiple regression analysis was used to analyse and summarize the data. Regression estimates was used to describe data and to explain the relationship between one dependent variable and one or more independent variables. The study found that loan recovery terms have a positive and significant effect on performance. It was therefore recommended that managers should consider reviewing good loan recovery terms when allocating loans. This is because such terms might be unfair to the beneficiaries. The gap here is that the researchers focused on the officers who process and give loans to the beneficiaries and hence the beneficiaries were not surveyed to ascertain whether loan recovery terms affect performance.

Palwasha, Ahmad and Majid (2018) also conducted a study collecting data from 250 faculty members working in public sector universities in Pakistan. The aim was to ascertain effect of training and development through supervisor support and employee retention as one of the indicators of organizational commitment. The partial least squares (PLS) path modeling was employed to analyze the data. The results revealed that training and development through support of the supervisors had a significant relationship with the retention of employees. As clarified by Tan (2008) supervisor support includes mentoring and the development of one's career network and job direction. This study only looked at mentoring or on the job training but did not look at the formal training for which staff are granted study leave after which they are awarded certificates. Their study only focused on the informal training support provided by supervisors on the job yet the current study focuses on not only the informal support but also formal training support in form of study leave, study loans, among others.

3. Methodology

The sample comprised of staff who were beneficiaries of the staff development policy at the different universities in Eastern Uganda. Purposive sampling technique was employed in that only those staff who had benefited from a university staff development programme were contacted. The researchers considered this category of respondents because they are the ones who ought to have experienced the different aspects of a staff development policy such that they may have been given study loans and therefore gone through the loan recovery process in addition to receiving other incentives embedded in the policy. It is these that had the most reliable information for the study. This sampling technique yielded a total of one hundred twenty-three (123) respondents out of whom more than

55% returned completed and usable questionnaires. A five-point Likert Scale was used for rating the items of the opinion survey ranging from (5 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree).

Reliability of the questionnaires was determined using Cronbach Alpha that stood at 0.873 implying that the questionnaire registered a high form of reliability.

Correlation and regression analyses were performed using SPSS package version 20 to test the relationship and the general effect of university staff development policy on the organizational commitment of beneficiaries.

4. Analysis

Organizational commitment comprised the dependent variable and it was measured by the extent to which the University has a great deal of personal meaning to the beneficiaries and whether they felt the problems of the university to be like their own problems. The full details of the beneficiaries' responses to these items are summarized in Table 1.

It is established in Table 1 that 44.1% of the beneficiaries agreed that the University has a great deal of personal meaning to them, as 32.4% strongly agreed as well. On the flipside, 8.8% of the respondents were in disagreement that the University has personal meaning to them whereas 2.9% also strongly disagreed. According to the findings in Table 1, 44.1% of the beneficiaries of the staff development programme agreed that they felt that the problem of the university to be like their own problem while 22.1% strongly agreed to this notion as well. Analysis in Table 1 established that 47.1% of the beneficiaries were not sure whether they would work with the University until retirement. Yet, 20.6% and 7.4% agreed and strongly agreed to this statement respectively. This implies that despite the bond forms in place as per the University staff development policy, the beneficiaries expect to get other opportunities elsewhere thus being not sure whether they would stay with the University until retirement. Results in Table 2 also revealed that 26.5% of the respondents disagreed and 14.7% strongly disagreed that they would feel guilty if they left the University. This therefore implies that some of the beneficiaries are frustrated by the staff development policy that leaves them with a great deal of debts to be paid back hence bringing about a feeling of isolation because they tend to suffer after resuming duties with the university.

Table 1; Some Responses on Organizational Commitment

No.	Item	Responses		
		SA & A	N	D & SD
		%	%	%
1.	The University has a Great Deal of Personal Meaning for Me	76.5	11.8	11.7
2.	I Feel that the Problem of the University is Like my own Problem.	66.2	14.7	19.1
3.	I Think that I would work with the University until Retirement.	28.0	47.1	25.0
4.	I would feel Guilty if I left the University Now.	35.3	23.5	41.2

4.1.1 Effect of Financial Training Support on Organizational Commitment of Beneficiaries

Data was analyzed using both descriptive and correlation analysis. But before testing the relationship between financial training support and organizational commitment of beneficiaries, descriptive statistics was analyzed as indicated in Table 2. It is indicated from the table that 32.4% of the respondents agreed and 11.8% strongly agreed that the University facilitates employees to attend seminars and conferences. In addition, 41.2% of the respondents were in agreement that the university mobilizes internal resources to support staff development as 10.3% strongly agreed to this notion as well. Also, 29.4% of the respondents agreed that the University organizes in-service training courses for staff to enable them acquire new skills in their professions while 14.7% also strongly agreed. It is noted from the table that 29.4% of the respondents agreed that staff are given opportunities to practice what they studied after training while 22.1% strongly agreed to this statement. Additionally, 29.4% of the respondents agreed that the University recognizes individuals for engaging in personal development whereas 14.7% strongly agreed to this statement. Last but not least, 42.6% of the respondents were in disagreement that the university carries out induction training for new staff and 13.2% strongly disagreed with this notion. Finally, 48.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 39.7% agreed that the University encourages staff to pursue further academic studies to improve on their skills. The analysis here concludes that most of the staff were not taken through induction training before commencement of their duties at the University which is supposed to make the first impression to new employees which is also a catalyst for their commitment.

Table 2; Some responses on Financial Training Support

No.	Item	Responses		
		SA & A	N	D & SD
		%	%	%
1.	The University Facilitates Employees to Attend Seminars/Conferences.	44.2	20.6	35.2
2.	The University Provides Internal Resources for Employee Development.	51.5	25.0	23.5
3.	The University Organizes In-service Training Courses for Staff to Enable them Acquire New Skills in their Professions.	44.1	19.1	36.7
4.	Staff are Given Opportunities to Practice what they Studied after Training.	51.5	26.5	22.1
5.	The University Recognizes Individuals for Engaging in Personal Development.	44.1	25.0	30.8
6.	Management carries out Induction Training for New Staff in the University.	14.7	29.4	55.8
7.	Employees are Encouraged to Pursue Further Academic Studies to Improve on their Skills.	88.2	7.4	4.4

Testing the relationship between financial training support on organizational commitment of beneficiaries

After the descriptive analysis above, a correlation matrix was generated to establish the relationship between financial training support and organizational commitment of university beneficiaries. As indicated in Table 3, there was a positive and significant correlation between Financial Training Support and Organizational Commitment of university beneficiaries ($r = .978^{**}$, $n = 68$, $p < 0.0001$) implying that the more the University endeavors to provide the needed support to staff to pursue the available training and development opportunities, the more they are poised to commit themselves to the institution.

Table 3; Correlation Matrix

	Financial Training Support	Promotion with Compensation	Fund Recovery from Staff	Organizational Commitment
Financial Training Support	-			
Promotion with Compensation	.689**	-		
Fund Recovery from Staff	.234**	.312**	-	
Organizational Commitment	.978**	.964**	.977**	-

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)

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

4.1.2 Promotion with Compensation After Staff Training and Organizational Commitment of Beneficiaries

Before determining the relationship between promotion with compensation after staff training and organizational commitment of beneficiaries, descriptive statistics was first analyzed. As indicated in Table 4, the results reveal that most of the respondents (55.9%) agreed that the University has a written and Operational Promotion Policy that is equitable to all SDP Beneficiaries. However, 48.6% of the respondents were of the view that most staff salaries are not commensurate to their level of qualification after training. The analysis also reveals that 88.2% of the respondents agreed that staff have access to health facilities for themselves and their families. However, 79.4% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that salaries for SDP beneficiaries are fair in comparison with other similar institutions in the country. Table 4 also shows that majority of the respondents (63.2%) were in disagreement that salaries of SDP beneficiaries are regularly reviewed. This means that indeed most staff salaries are not in line with their level of qualification which is bound to affect their level of commitment to the institution.

Table 4; Some responses on Promotion with Compensation After Staff Training

No.	Item	Responses		
		SA & A	N	D & SD
		%	%	%
1.	Most Staff Salaries are Commensurate to their Level of Qualification after Training.	39.7	11.8	48.6
2.	Salaries for SDP Beneficiaries are Fair in Comparison with other Similar Institutions in the Country.	2.9	17.6	79.4
3.	Salaries of SDP Beneficiaries are Regularly Reviewed	7.3	29.4	63.2
4.	The University has a Written and Operational Promotion Policy that is Equitable to all SDP Beneficiaries.	55.9	29.4	14.7
5.	Staff have Access to Health Facilities for themselves and their Families	88.2	4.4	2.9

Testing the relationship between Promotion with Compensation After Staff Training and Organizational Commitment of Beneficiaries

A correlation analysis was also employed to determine the relationship between promotion with compensation after staff training and organizational commitment of beneficiaries. Results support the hypothesis that there is a positive and significant relationship between compensation and promotion has a significant and positive association with organizational commitment of beneficiaries at the Islamic University in Uganda ($r = .964^{**}$, $n = p < 0.0001$) as indicated in Table 3. This means that the more the staff get paid leave, have access to health facilities for themselves and their families with fair and equitable promotion, the better they will be able to offer their services and be committed to the institution.

4.1.3 Fund Recovery from Staff after Training and Organizational Commitment of Beneficiaries

It can be deduced from Table 5 that majority of the respondents (66.2%) agreed that study loans can be postponed to enable staff meet urgent needs. However, 45.6% of the respondents disagreed that the study loan recovery terms are flexible. Similarly, it is noted that 66.2% of the respondents disagreed that staff at the University continue to receive full salaries during the study leave period. Moreover, 44.2% of the respondents agreed that there are legal consequences for staff who abscond from duty before repaying the study loan. Finally, 57.4% of the respondents said that staff are not offered grace period for repayment of the study loan after studies. The findings here provide insights in the need to improve on the current policies and provide for flexibility and plasticity in as far as study loan recovery terms are concerned.

Table 5; Some responses on Fund Recovery from Staff after Training

No.	Item	Responses		
		SA & A	N	D & SD
		%	%	%
1.	Study Loans can be Postponed to enable Staff meet Urgent Needs.	66.2	13.2	20.6
2.	Staff are Offered Grace Period for Repayment of the Study Loan after Studies.	32.3	10.3	57.4
3.	There are Legal Consequences for Staff who Abscond from Duty before Repaying the Study Loan.	44.2	29.4	26.5
4.	Study Loan Recovery Terms are Flexible.	36.8	17.6	45.6
5.	Staff Continue to Receive Full Salaries During the Study Leave Period.	19.2	14.7	66.2

Testing the relationship between Fund Recovery from Staff after Training and Organizational Commitment of Beneficiaries

In order to test the hypothesis fund recovery terms from beneficiaries influences their organizational commitment, a correlation matrix was generated. As indicated in Table 3, the results reveal a significant and positive correlation between fund recovery and organizational commitment of beneficiaries at the Islamic University in Uganda ($r = .977^{**}$, $p < 0.0001$). This implies that the more the university improves its study loan recovery procedure that can enable staff to remain with some sufficient amount to meet their basic needs and also take care of their families, the better they will be able to offer their services and be committed to the institution.

Analyzing the Overall Effect of Staff Development Policy on the Organizational Commitment of University Beneficiaries

In order to determine the overall effect of staff development policy on the organizational commitment of university beneficiaries, a multiple regression was performed using organizational commitment as the dependent variable. Results for analysis are presented in table 6.

Table 6: Regression Analysis

Model	Coefficients ^a					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
	(Constant)	-.072	.098		-.731	.467
1	Financial Training Support	.755	.138	.767	5.470	.000
	Compensation with Promotion	-.344	.141	-.349	-2.434	.018
	Fund Recovery	.534	.116	.568	4.607	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

As indicated in Table 6, among the three (3) variables studied here, only two (2) variables have a significant and positive effect on organizational commitment. These are; financial training support [$\beta = .767$, $t = 5.470$, $p < 0.0001$]; and fund recovery procedure [$\beta = .568$, $t = 4.607$, $p < 0.0001$]. The other variable of compensation with promotion has a significant but negative effect on organizational commitment [$\beta = -.349$, $t = -2.434$, $p < 0.018$]. In other words, it is only financial training support and fund recovery process that universities have effectively carried

out. This was measured by the degree to which the universities facilitate employees to attend seminars and international conferences, provide internal resources for employee development and encourage staff to pursue further academic studies to improve on their skills. Therefore, much as universities have made significant efforts to support staff through providing study loans and putting in place fair terms of fund recovery, this has left staff with no significant funds to meet their daily needs. The fact therefore remains that that at present it is only financial training support and fair fund recovery that can determine and guarantee organizational commitment. For compensation with promotion, the University is challenged to expedite its efforts in improving staff salaries to be in tandem with similar public and private institutions in the country.

5. Discussion

This study provides an insight in the effect of staff development policy on organizational commitment of university beneficiaries. The study documents that providing financial training support to staff has a significant effect on their commitment to the organization. The current state of affairs indicates that organizing in-service training courses for staff to enable them acquire new skills in their professions are desirable since they constitute significant determinants of organizational commitment. Benefits of financial training support for both employees and employers are reciprocal. Employees benefit by receiving contemporary skills and higher salaries especially after promotion, whereas the organization benefits as its employees are more committed to the organization, and work harder with the required zeal, effectiveness and productivity. In fact, Mpaata and Mpaata (2018) concluded that all institutions regardless of whether they are private or public should refocus their strategies and ensure that there is not only effective teaching but also put in place professional staff who are willing to provide the required instruction to deliver the education agenda. The same view is shared Onah & Anikwe (2016) who investigated the attraction and retention of academic staff in Nigeria Universities and concluded that these are the most important activities for the success of an organization.

Moreover, studies similar to this one has shown the importance of a social contract between the employee and the employer (Laskar, 2013). It is on the basis of this that when bondage practices are made between the staff who go for further training and the university, it should be both motivational and satisfactory to stimulate staff to work beyond mere compensation such that they have feelings of obligation to remain with the organization. Similarly, the research on the importance of compensation to attraction and retention of staff in universities are diverse and they all point to the need for universities to ensure that the highly trained and skilled staff are not only properly remunerated but also have attractive non-financial benefits to enable them have both affective and continuance commitment with both positive feelings of identification with, attachment to and involved in, the work of the organization (Lisa, et al., 2017). This study supports this observation and adds that in order for universities to carryout successful staff training and development, there is need for them to solicit for funds both internally and externally, avail it to staff and thereafter bond them with an attractive salary which can inspire them to remain with the organization. This is in agreement with Mpaata, Lubogoyi and Kakumba (2017) who provided insights in the need for management to consider the difficulties that are embedded in loan payment. This study highlights that the importance of ensuring fair compensation as a precursor for staff retention after study. The current compensation practices negatively influence organizational commitment and therefore must be significantly improved on to not only attract but retain staff in private institutions. As for promotion, what is enshrined in the promotion policy is clear but can only be significant when somebody has trained, developed and worked for some time.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the major finding of this study is that the three (3) variables of financial training support, promotion with compensation and fund recovery not only significantly correlate but also influence staff commitment to the university. In other words, a policy that assists staff to develop in terms of training and caters for compensation aspects after the desirable capacity building attributes becomes timely and relevant. However, the study here shows that it is only training financial support that is done very well when the staffs are in dire need to go for further studies but on coming back what is paid by the Institution in terms of compensation and promotion does not enable them to pay and can slowly but steadily erode staff commitment to the institution in the long run. Therefore, for universities to succeed in cultivating organizational commitment and performance, there is need to solicit for funds to enable staff development programmes to be sustainable and avoid undue stress on the beneficiaries. This is more so when the monies that the staffs are supposed to pay cannot be realized by the recipient after even working until retirement. Only when the above requirements are given attention and implemented will the universities be able to prevent staff turnover and allow organizational commitment to prevail.

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