

Research Article

# Causes and Effects of Academic Staff Turnover Intentions on Organizational Performance: Comparative Studies on Ambo and Haramaya Universities

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to conduct a comparative analysis of the causes of academic staff turnover intentions and their impact on the performance of Ambo and Haramaya Universities. The study primarily focused on factors such as socio-demographic characteristics, job satisfaction, compensation, work environment, and leadership style as determinants of academic staff turnover. A stratified sampling method was used to determine the sample population, while a convenience sampling technique was employed to collect data from the sample. Out of a total population of 1,672 academic staff members, a sample size of 143 was determined using Yamane's sampling formula. Of the 143 distributed questionnaires, 133 were returned, with 10 remaining uncollected. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized, with primary data gathered through questionnaires. The research was designed as a descriptive and explanatory study to both describe relevant statistical data and explain the causes and effects observed in the study. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and numerical values, as well as inferential statistics, such as correlation analyses and multiple regression models. University performance was measured through various indicators, including stakeholder engagement and satisfaction, revenue generation from business entities, quality of education, research and community services, the expansion of universities with modern facilities, and the number of academic programs offered. The findings revealed that the causes of academic staff turnover have a positive relationship with university performance, while turnover itself has a negative relationship with university performance. This implies that if universities effectively manage the causes of academic staff turnover, their overall performance is likely to improve.

## Keywords

Causes, Effects, Turnover, Universities, Performance

## 1. Introduction

With globalization which is heightening competition, organizations must continue to develop tangible products and provide services that are based on strategies created by employees. These employees are extremely crucial to the organ-

ization since their value to the organization is essentially intangible and not easily replicated [1]. Therefore, managers must recognize that employees as major contributors to the efficient achievement of the organization's success [2]. Man-

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agers should control employee turnover for the benefit of the organization's success. Many factors play a role in the employee turnover rate of any company, and these can stem from both the employer and the employees. Compensation, job satisfaction, leadership style, socio-demographic factors, and work environment are all factors that play a significant role in employee turnover. Companies take a deep interest in their employee turnover rate because it is a costly part of doing business [3].

The most common reason for the employee turnover rate being so high is the salary scale because employees are usually in search of jobs that pay well. Employees become employed in an organization for the first not only due to they like the professionals but also because to carry themselves (be independent) and after some time they search for better-paying employment. Employees also tend to leave a company because of unsatisfactory performance appraisals. Low payment is a good reason why an employee may be lacking in performance [4]. Turn-over adversely affects organizations' performance. It is often suggested that organizations should adopt clear Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) that decrease the gap between the top management and the middle management to identify and resolve the issue of employee turnover in the organization. The performance of an organization with a high rate of turnover is lower than its competitors with a low turnover rate [5].

By their unique nature universities are expected to be a repository of the most specialized and skilled intellectuals. They serve as storehouses of knowledge for nurturing the manpower needs of the nation and hence for satisfying the aspirations of the people for a good and humane society. Central to the realization of University goals and objectives are the academic staff whose roles are crucial and their number, quality, and effectiveness make a difference in university education production function and to the wider society [6].

Ethiopian Universities are also working to ensure the quality of education, indirectly to produce competent, qualified, and innovative human power for sustainable growth and development of a country. To achieve this, the universities need to be strategic in retaining their employees' specifically academic staff to decrease the rate of staff turnover in the organization. The academic profession is fundamental to the functioning of any university. Without well-qualified and committed academic staff, no academic institution can ensure sustainability and quality over the long haul. Higher education institutions are therefore more dependent on the intellectual and creative abilities and commitment of the academic staff than most other organizations [7]. So, the university's performance depends on the work of academic staff and if they fail to retain their academic staff by answering the causes of why they leave the university, the performance will get lower and the turnover will be high.

This study aims to comparatively assess the causes of academic staff turnover intentions and their impact on the performance of Ambo and Haramaya Universities. Education

plays a critical role in global change, and universities are key to developing the workforce necessary for a nation's socio-economic and technological advancement [8]. However, the ability of universities to retain their staff, which is crucial for organizational success, is influenced by various factors such as pay, work environment, leadership style, and organizational commitment [9, 10]. High turnover can lead to significant negative consequences, including loss of skilled staff, knowledge, and stakeholder satisfaction. While previous studies in Ethiopia have explored employee turnover and its impact on organizational performance, they have not specifically focused on the comparative analysis of academic staff turnover in universities. Therefore, this research seeks to fill that gap by identifying the causes of turnover, and its effects on university performance, and offering recommendations to address these challenges.

## 1.1. Research Hypothesis

The researcher develops the following hypothesis with five independent variables (Socio-demographic factors, Job satisfaction, Compensation, Leadership style, and Work environment) and one dependent variable (University performance).

H1: There is a significant relationship between academic staff turnover and university performance.

H2: There is a significant relationship between demographic factors (gender, education level) and university performance.

H3: There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and university performance.

H4: There is a significant relationship between compensation and university performance.

H5: There is a significant relationship between leadership style (participatory management) and university performance.

H6: There is a significant relationship between work environment and university performance.

## 1.2. Scope of the Study

The study focused only on the comparative studies on causes of academic staff turnover intentions (socio-demographic factors, job satisfaction, compensation, work environment, and leadership style) and its effect on the universities performance of Ambo and Haramaya Universities than other Ethiopian Universities due to their difference in location, facilities, work experience and cost-effectiveness of the research. The respondents of the research were: academic staff of the universities.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Theoretical Background of the Study

*Organizational equilibrium theory (OET)*: [11] stated that

Employee Turnover occurs when individuals perceive that their contributions to an organization exceed the inducements they received from that organization. According to [12], an individual tries to satisfy his needs or motives, but in many cases, he cannot get enough satisfaction due to many types of human limitations. When an individual cannot get satisfaction, he will withhold or withdraw his contributions and will separate from the organization. According to this theory, employees are looking for the organization to provide incentives that balance their contribution. This indicates when the incentive offered by the organization to the employees is less than their contribution, employees become dissatisfied with the inducement and this leads to turnover.

*Met expectation theory:* [13] stated that the concept of met expectations is the discrepancy between what a person encounters on the job in the way of positive or negative experiences and what he expects to encounter. Employee "expectations may include fair remunerations, advancement, and good relationships with colleagues and supervisors, suitable working environment, and appropriate work assignment. The essential thought of this theory is that when an employer fails to fulfil an employee's expectation, it will lead to employee turnover.

*Linkage model:* The linkage model explains a series of interrelated links between job satisfaction and voluntary employee turnover. In this model one major factor is considered job dissatisfaction which leads to a series of withdrawal intentions like thoughts of quitting, job search intentions, and fringe benefits comparison, this behaviour ultimately is the cause of high voluntary employee turnover [11].

*Unfolding model of turnover:* According to [14], the unfolding model is a retrospective, classificatory account of voluntary turnover that treats quitting as a decision process. The unfolding model of employee turnover is specifically focused on four psychological paths that an employee chooses when he leaves the job. The process of turnover starts from the shock of that employee's premeditated judgment about their jobs. This shock is then directly linked with employees' systems of belief and images. The ultimate result of this shock employee has to quit the job without considering emotional attachment to the organization [11].

*Job Embeddedness theory:* Job embeddedness describes the factors that keep an individual from leaving the organization, despite experiencing situations that might lead to thoughts of leaving. Job embeddedness can be work-related (positive relationships with supervisor and coworkers, good health benefits) or non-work-related (spouse works in the same area, parents live in the same community). These work and non-work domains can be further divided into three types of attachment that are links (how many people is the individual connected with), fit (does the individual feel well matched with their work and non-work environment), and sacrifice (what does the individual have to give up to leave) [9, 10].

## 2.2. Empirical Evidence

*Socio-Demographic Factors:* Employee turnover can be influenced by various socio-demographic factors, such as age, gender, qualifications, marital status, and experience [17]. highlighted that these characteristics play a significant role in an employee's decision to leave an organization. [21] Found that top-performing females have turnover rates 2.5 times higher than their male counterparts due to challenges in balancing work and family life. Additionally, more qualified employees and those with greater experience are more likely to leave, seeking better opportunities [11]. These factors contribute to higher turnover among academic staff, especially those who are highly qualified or face difficulties in balancing personal and professional life [21]. Increased turnover disrupts the continuity of teaching and research activities, leading to decreased university performance and a potential decline in academic reputation [20].

*Job Satisfaction:* is a critical factor influencing employee turnover. It encompasses a combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental conditions that affect how an employee feels about their job [22]. Higher job satisfaction leads to lower turnover, while dissatisfaction increases the likelihood of leaving the organization [23]. Satisfied employees are more likely to be committed to their organization, whereas dissatisfaction often results in a higher intent to leave [24]. Low job satisfaction among academic staff leads to higher turnover, as dissatisfied employees seek opportunities elsewhere [24]. This turnover disrupts the learning environment, hampers research progress, and undermines the university's ability to maintain a stable, experienced faculty, ultimately affecting overall performance [25].

*Compensation:* plays a pivotal role in employee retention. Adequate monetary rewards, including salary and fringe benefits, are essential in minimizing turnover [11]. Employees often leave organizations in search of better compensation packages [26]. Fairness in compensation is crucial, as perceived inequity can lead to higher turnover rates [17]. Insufficient or inequitable compensation contributes significantly to turnover among academic staff, as they may seek better-paying positions at other institutions [26]. High turnover due to compensation issues leads to a loss of experienced faculty, increased recruitment costs, and diminished academic quality, negatively impacting the university's performance [15].

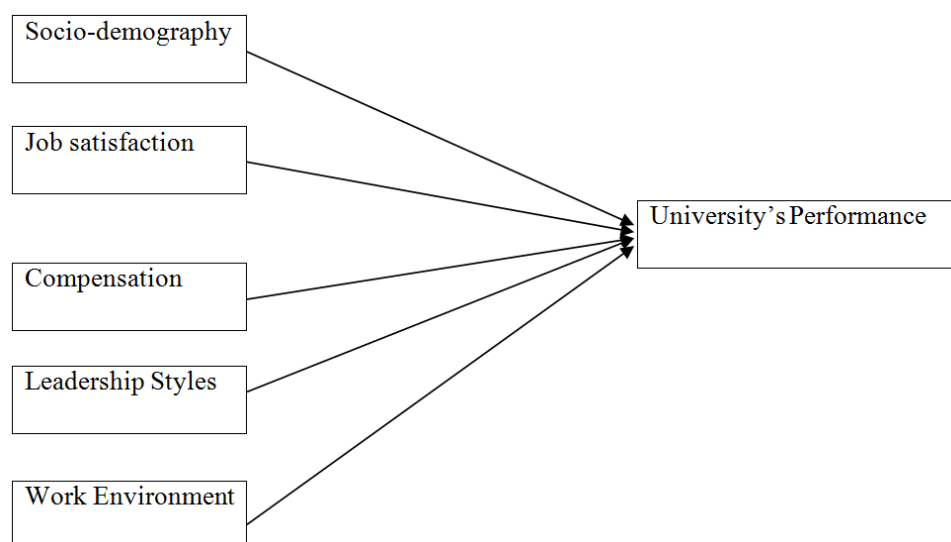
*Leadership Styles:* significantly impacts employee turnover. Effective leadership involves clear communication, participatory decision-making, and trust in employees' abilities [16, 17]. Employees are more likely to stay in organizations where they feel included in decision-making processes and have supportive supervisors [18]. Poor leadership styles, characterized by a lack of support and exclusion from decision-making, contribute to higher turnover among academic staff [16]. This turnover affects the university's ability to retain talented educators and researchers, leading to instabil-

ity and reduced effectiveness in achieving educational and research goals [18].

**Work Environment:** A positive work environment is vital for employee retention. Factors such as supervision, autonomy, communication, and support contribute to job satisfaction and organizational commitment [19]. Employees prefer to work in environments that align with their values and offer a sense of security and well-being [17]. An unsatisfactory

work environment leads to higher turnover as academic staff seek better working conditions elsewhere [19]. This turnover disrupts the academic process, resulting in lower student satisfaction, decreased research output, and ultimately a decline in the university's overall performance and reputation [20].

#### *The Research Model*



Source: Compiled by author

**Figure 1.** The Research Model.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1. Study Area

The study was conducted at Haramaya and Ambo Universities. Haramaya University, located 510 km east of Addis Ababa, has nine colleges and 992 academic staff. Ambo University, 112 km west of Addis Ababa, is rapidly expanding with four campuses and 680 academic staff. The universities were chosen for comparison due to differences in location, work environment, and available resources, as well as research cost and time constraints.

### 3.2. Source and Method of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. Primary sources were academic staff of the universities and Secondary sources were books and journals. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire which is designed by Likert scale. The questionnaire also included open-ended and close-ended questions and the pilot test on respondents was conducted before the questionnaires were distributed to check the validity of the instrument.

### 3.3. Research Design

The research type was descriptive; and explanatory research. Descriptive was used to describe the quantitative data such as statistical and regression analysis. Explanatory also used to explain the causes of academic staff turnover intentions and its' effects on University performance comparatively.

### 3.4. Sampling Techniques

Stratified sampling was applied to sampling the population. The departments under selected colleges were used as strata and the questionnaire was distributed to them by using convenient techniques to get information from readily available respondents. The target population of the study was the academic staff of Ambo and Haramaya Universities. In determining the sample a formula developed by [27] was used at a 95% confidence level with a 0.05 level of precision. Therefore, 143 sample respondents were selected from the total of 1672 academic staff of both Universities.

### 3.5. Method of Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using SPSS version 16, descriptive and inferential statistics, and multiple regression models to analyze the result. Mathematical identification of the model: The multiple regression models were used as:  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \beta_5x_5 + e_i$ ; Where  $y$ =dependent variables,  $x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5$ =independent variables,  $\beta_0$  is the intercept,  $\beta_1$ , and other betas are indicate how much a dependent variable has a relationship with independent variables.

X1 = demographic factor (age, sex, income level, education level)

X2 = compensation (monetary and non-monetary pay)

X3 = leadership style (participative management)

X4 = job satisfaction

X5 = work environment (communication, promotion, support)

A researcher asks academic staff's perception of these variables as they are the causes of academic staff turnover and they have to be managed by the management body of the universities. If they are not answered, the turnover because of these variables (causes) will lead to low university performance.

### 3.6. Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

Reliability refers to the consistency of the measuring instrument. To test the reliability of the instrument Cronbach's Alpha was applied. This model is used to measure the internal consistency of the tools employed to get necessary data from respondents (see table below). The result shows that the reliability of the instrument employed for academic staff ranges from 0.701 to 0.79. This implies that the reliability of

the instrument is more than the acceptable standard in social science research. Validity, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which the measurement measures what is intended to measure. The instrument was designed by taking into consideration the basic questions and all items included in the questionnaires are directly derived from the research question and consistent with the objective of the study.

## 4. Results and Discussion

*Demography of the Respondents:* The respondents from Ambo and Haramaya Universities were primarily young male lecturers with master's degrees. Most respondents at Ambo University were married and had 3-5 years of experience, while those at Haramaya University were predominantly unmarried with some having PhDs and longer work experience. The data suggests that senior and highly educated staff are more likely to leave Haramaya University, while at Ambo University, less experienced and less educated staff are more stable.

### 4.1. The Multiple Regression Analysis Results

The multiple regression analysis conducted at Haramaya and Ambo Universities revealed that several factors significantly contribute to the performance of these institutions. The analysis found that job satisfaction, socio-demographic factors, compensation, work environment, and leadership style collectively explain 81.6% of the variance in university performance, indicating a strong relationship between these independent variables and the dependent variable: university performance.

**Table 1.** Regression Analysis of Factors Influencing University's Performance.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	.669	.100		6.717	.000
Mean of job satisfaction	.200	.030	.298	6.633	.000
Mean of socio-demography	.131	.018	.291	7.291	.000
Mean of compensation	.125	.025	.221	4.926	.000
Mean of working environment	.172	.028	.268	6.131	.000
Mean of leadership style	.171	.027	.288	6.386	.000
Dependent Variable: University's performance (UP)					

Source: Survey, 2016



## 4.2. Socio-Demographic Factors

Socio-demographic factors, including age, gender, marital status, and educational qualifications, also showed a significant positive relationship with university performance ( $\beta = 0.291$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Previous studies have shown that these factors can influence turnover intentions and organizational commitment [21]. For instance, younger academic staff or those with higher qualifications may seek better opportunities elsewhere, leading to higher turnover rates. Conversely, experienced and stable staff are likely to stay longer, contributing to institutional continuity and performance. This study's findings suggest that managing these socio-demographic factors effectively could help universities retain their staff and improve performance.

## 4.3. Job Satisfaction

The analysis demonstrated a relatively strong positive relationship between job satisfaction and university performance ( $\beta = 0.298$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding aligns with previous research that suggests higher job satisfaction leads to enhanced organizational commitment, productivity, and overall performance [25]. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to stay in the organization, reducing turnover rates, and contributing positively to institutional success. In the context of universities, satisfied academic staff are more engaged, motivated, and committed to their roles, which can enhance teaching quality, research output, and student satisfaction [24].

## 4.4. Compensation

Compensation was found to have a positive impact on university performance ( $\beta = 0.221$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), consistent

with the literature that highlights the role of fair and adequate compensation in retaining employees and reducing turnover [26, 11]. Adequate compensation packages, including salaries, bonuses, and benefits, can motivate staff to remain in their positions, thereby reducing turnover rates and ensuring that universities retain skilled and experienced faculty members. This retention is crucial for maintaining high standards of education and research.

## 4.5. Work Environment

The work environment also had a significant positive effect on university performance ( $\beta = 0.268$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A supportive, healthy, and well-equipped work environment is crucial for academic staff satisfaction and retention [19]. Universities that provide a conducive work environment are more likely to retain their staff, which in turn positively influences performance. This includes providing necessary resources, fostering a collegial atmosphere, and ensuring that academic staff have a say in decision-making processes [17].

## 4.6. Leadership Style

Leadership style was another significant factor influencing university performance ( $\beta = 0.288$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Effective leadership is essential in creating a positive organizational culture, inspiring staff, and fostering a sense of commitment [16]. Participatory leadership styles that involve academic staff in decision-making can lead to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover, as staff feel valued and integral to the university's success [18]. The study indicates that leadership styles that emphasize collaboration, communication, and support can significantly enhance university performance by reducing turnover and increasing staff engagement.

## 4.7. Multiple Regression Analysis: Model Summary

*Table 2. The Model Summary for the Regression Analysis.*

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	R square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change	Durbin-Watson
1	.907	.823	.816	.18337	.823	118.189	5	127	.000	1.630

Source: Survey, 2016

## 5. Implications and Conclusion

The results of this study underscore the importance of addressing key factors such as job satisfaction, socio-demographic characteristics, compensation, work environment, and leadership style to enhance university performance. The

significant associations between these factors and performance suggest that universities need to implement strategies that improve job satisfaction, offer competitive compensation, create supportive work environments, and adopt effective leadership styles. By doing so, they can reduce turnover rates, retain skilled staff, and ultimately improve their overall performance.

The findings also suggest that while these factors are critical, there may be other unexplained variables that influence

university performance. Future research could explore these additional factors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of university success. However, the strong relationships identified in this study highlight the need for university administrators to focus on these key areas to enhance their institutions' performance and achieve long-term sustainability.

## Abbreviations

UP      University's Performance (UP)

## Author Contributions

Abebe Techan Tolossa is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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## Research Fields

**Abebe Techan Tolossa:** Management, Business Administration, Applied Management