



## Moderating role of employee commitment on the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance in public universities in Western Uganda

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### ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the moderating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance in public universities in Western Uganda. The study was guided by the Egalitarian Theory of Talent Management, and a cross-sectional research design was adopted in the study. From a population of 1156, a sample size of 320 respondents was obtained in two phases: first, a census was used for the human resource directors and top management since the population was small (12 respondents); then secondly, the Yamane formula was used to calculate the sample size for the university council members and teaching and administrative staff, which yielded a sample of 308 respondents. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the human resource directors and top management, while simple random sampling was used for the council members and teaching and administrative staff. Using structured questionnaires, quantitative data was then collected from the 320 respondents of the two selected public universities (Mbarara University of Science and Technology and Kabale University). Data was then analyzed using structural modeling techniques. The findings revealed that the moderating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance was not statistically significant for either administrative or academic staff in Ugandan public universities. Specifically, for administrative staff, the interaction effect was not significant ( $z = -0.268$ ,  $p = 0.789$ ), although the direct effect of talent management on performance was statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.348$ ,  $z = 2.161$ ,  $p = 0.031$ ), and the total effect remained strong ( $\beta = 0.314$ ,  $z = 3.684$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that talent management practices such as attraction, development, retention, and motivation directly improved administrative staff performance, regardless of commitment levels. The study recommended that universities should focus on strengthening talent management initiatives directly, and while fostering employee commitment is important, efforts should prioritize implementing effective attraction, development, motivation, and retention strategies that independently drive performance improvements.

**Keywords:** Employee Commitment, Employees Performance, Public Universities, Talent Management Practices

### I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of talent management was first introduced by McKinsey & Company through their 1997 study on the “war for talent,” which later culminated in the publication of one of the earliest books on the subject in 2001 (Handfield-Jones et al., 2001). Talent management is defined as the strategic process of getting the right talent at the right place and helping them grow to their optimal capabilities, keeping the organizational objectives in mind. It is the systematic process of identifying the vacant positions, hiring the suitable persons, developing their skills and expertise to match the positions and retaining them to achieve long-term business objectives (Kumar, 2022). Talent management plays an important role in the overall strategy of a business since it manages one of the important assets of the company; its people. Hence, leaders in any organization work very hard to attract, hire, develop and retain talent. Because they believe that people are the only assets that innovate in any organization and innovation is the only path to sustain performance, therefore, managing talent will give some advantage to their company.

Hiltrop (1999) highlights the use of effective human resource practices for attracting and retaining talent in an organization which helps to improve the competitiveness of the organization. He is of the view that in the new generation, people are highly educated professionals who demand more autonomy and flexibility in their jobs and at

the same time are looking for meaning work. Kimani and Waithaka (2013) asserts that an organization can maximize its performance only if it is able to manage its talent effectively and this can be done if an organization implements high-performance talent management practices. Ruddy and Anand (2010) believed that an organization must have the right people at the right job if it wants to survive and if companies don't give priority to succession planning or leadership development, then they may face high attrition rate of their talents or will only have people with outdated skills. According to (Babynina et al., 2021), the whole of a person's abilities, including their innate talents, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitudes, character, and desires, is referred to as their talent. Talent management is the process of organizing, obtaining, preserving, developing, retaining and utilizing human resources to get a competitive advantage in the market.

According to Jyoti and Rani (2014) the goal of talent management systems and integrated methodologies is to improve workplace productivity by establishing processes for more effectively attracting, developing, hiring and retaining individuals who possess the aptitude and skills needed to meet current and future corporate requirements. Silzer and Dowell (2010) claims that in order to meet strategic goals and future business requirements, talent management is an integrated system of policies, practices and cultural norms created and implemented in an organisation. However, (Ahmed et al., 2013) explains talent management as an ongoing process that involves recruiting, selecting, training, developing, retaining and elevating employees while also meeting the demands of the company. Moreover, talent management is an essential function that ensures organizations have the quantity and quality of personnel required to meet their current and future business requirements (Chahal & Kumari, 2013). Meanwhile, through integrated talent acquisition, development and deployment procedures that align with business objectives, an organisation can deliver both short- and long-term benefits by enhancing its culture, engagement, capability and capacity. Moreover, a thorough method for maximising human capital is talent management (Wuim-Pam, 2014).

Employee performance is a systematic and integrated strategy to boosting an organization's effectiveness by enhancing employee performance and building the capacities of teams and individual contributors (Chien et al., 2020). Performance is correlated with output quality and timeliness, presence at work, effectiveness of work accomplished and efficiency of work completed (Otoo et al., 2019). It can also be described as the successful completion of a task as determined by previously established standards for correctness, completeness, cost and speed (Ezeanyim et al., 2019). Armstrong and Mitchell (2019) define employee performance as an organised, systematic and integrated approach to increasing productivity within an organisation through the development of individual and team contributors as well as improved employee performance. Performance is correlated with timeliness and quality of output, presence and attendance at work, productivity of finished work and effectiveness of completed work. However, Armstrong (2014) describe performance as the accomplishment of a work in relation to predetermined standards for correctness, completeness, cost and time. Results-based evaluations of employee performance are the norm.

In a university setting, the performance of academic staff members is evaluated on their contributions to teaching and learning, publishing, research and community involvement. In order to boost an organization's success, employee performance, as utilized in this study, refers to a methodical and integrated strategy to staff performance improvement and individual and team contributor abilities. Performance is defined as producing work in a timely and high-quality manner, arriving at work on time, and successfully and efficiently accomplishing assignments. The timely completion of tasks, excellent output, productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness, teaching and learning, research and publications, as well as community involvement, are all examples of how employee performance is operationalized in this study. Employee performance in this study refers to how efficiently and effectively employees contribute to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Employee performance could be assessed by considering the frequency of absences, the caliber of reports, and the times at which employees report for and leave duty (O'Donovan, 2019). Sahibzada et al. (2022) revealed that productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness, as well as quality output and punctuality, will be used to evaluate staff performance.

Employee commitment is defined as the workers' sense of obligation to stay with the company (Meyer *et al.*, 1990). According to Al Hakim et al. (2022), the attachment workers have to their employer is known as employee commitment. The same authors clarify that loyal employees usually experience a connection to their organisation, a sense of comprehension of its goals, and a sense of belonging, and these employees add value because they are more dedicated to their work, produce at a high rate, and offer help more proactively. Employee commitment is also defined as a psychological state that characterizes an employee's relationship with the organization, and it has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization. It consists of three components: affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Meyer et al, 2004). Furthermore, employee commitment refers to the emotional and psychological attachment an employee has toward their organization, which influences their intention to stay, performance, and overall engagement in organizational activities (Cohen, 2018).

Additionally, employee commitment can be understood as the dedication an employee demonstrates towards organizational goals, which drives their willingness to exert effort, stay loyal, and contribute positively to organizational outcomes (Mathe *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, employee commitment is a multidimensional concept that includes the individual's emotional connection to the organization, their recognition of the costs of leaving, and a sense of obligation to remain with the organization (Liou, 2021). The current study defines employee commitment as the emotional bond that forms between an individual and an organisation, motivating them to stay on staff and help the latter achieve its objectives. It is the sense of responsibility one has for the goals, purposes, and vision of the organisation to which they belong. Workers that are dedicated to their company are more likely to deliver quality work. Universities may encourage commitment by encouraging a feeling of community, offering chances for development, and praising staff members' efforts.

### 1.1 Research Objective

To examine the moderation effect of employee commitment on the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance.

### 1.2 Research Question

What is the moderation effect of employee commitment on the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance in Public Universities?

### 1.3 Research Hypothesis

$H_{01}$ : Employee commitment does not have a significant moderation effect on the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

#### 2.1.1 Egalitarian Theory of Talent Management

The study was guided by the Egalitarian Theory as originally conceptualized by Rawls John in 1971 in his seminal work *A Theory of Justice* which provides the philosophical foundation for fairness, equity and inclusion in social and organizational systems. Rawls (1971) emphasized the importance of fair distribution of opportunities and resources in a manner that benefits all members of society, especially the least advantaged. Central to his theory is the difference principle which posits that inequalities are only acceptable if they improve the situation of the most disadvantaged. Building on Rawls (1971) philosophical principles, Iles et al. (2010) introduced the Egalitarian Theory of Talent Management, challenging the traditional elitist model of talent development. They argued for an inclusive approach in which all employees are regarded as having potential that can be nurtured. This theory assumes that every worker, if given the right conditions, can contribute meaningfully to organizational performance. It advocates for equal access to development opportunities, career progression, recognition and participation in institutional growth.

### 2.2 Conceptual Review

#### 2.2.1 Talent management practices

The organization's talented workers are its heart and soul, so it is imperative that the company endeavor to keep them on board. Talent management entails recruiting, inspiring, developing and keeping skilled individuals (Hendri, 2019). In this respect, the intentional process of identifying, developing and keeping employees who possess the knowledge and abilities to meet the organization's current and future demands is known as talent management. Also, Talent management is the methodical process of attracting, identifying, developing, engaging, maintaining, and deploying people who are especially valuable to a company, either because of their "high potential" for the future or because they are performing vital roles for the company's operations (Luna-Arocas et al., 2020) citing the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2019)). Talent management is the deliberate recruitment, assessment, development, retention and deployment of individuals who possess high potential and significantly contribute to an organisation, according to Mohammed (2015).

Talent management is an essential function that ensures organisations have the quantity and quality of personnel required to meet their current and future business requirements (Chahal & Kumari, 2013). Through integrated talent acquisition, development, and deployment procedures that align with business objectives, an organisation can deliver both short- and long-term benefits by enhancing its culture, engagement, capability, and capacity. A thorough method for maximizing human capital is talent management (Wuim-Pam, 2014). Additionally, making sure that the necessary skills are available when and where they are needed is the fundamental goal of talent

management, which helps the organisation achieve its strategic objectives. Employing integrated strategies or procedures to better draw in, nurture, and retain personnel possessing the abilities and drive to meet present and future organisational demands (Li & Wang, 2010). Thus, Organisational leaders' thinking about the importance of talent to corporate performance has a big impact on talent management, which operates at a strategic, integrative level (Abdul-Kareem, 2016).

### 2.2.2 Employee performance

Employee performance in this study refers to how efficiently and effectively people contribute to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Employee performance could be assessed by considering the frequency of absences, the caliber of reports, and the times at which employees report for and leave duty (O'Donovan, 2019). (Sahibzada et al., 2022) mentioned that productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness, as well as quality output and punctuality, will be used to evaluate staff performance. Furthermore, employee performance is the result or the contribution of workers towards achieving goals. It may also be used to describe the process, results relevancy, and success of an organisation (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). According to Chams and García-Blandón (2019), Performance is the degree to which specific activities are completed in relation to predefined or established standards for accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed. Increased production, ease of use of new technologies, and highly motivated staff are indicators of strong employee performance.

When evaluating performance, a variety of factors can be considered, including productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and timeliness measurements (Jain & Ahuja, 2019), as cited in Nassazi (2013) and briefly explained hereafter. The ability of a product or service to satisfy stated or implied needs is referred to as quality (Armstrong & Kotler, 2003). The ultimate product's effectiveness, accuracy, and/or quality are all measured by the quality of the output. Qualities can include things like effectiveness, usefulness, appearance and accuracy. In the university context, employee performance directly influences institutional ranking, student attraction, student satisfaction, research impact, and stakeholder trust. High-performing academic staff enhance the university's intellectual capital, while efficient administrative teams support the operational backbone of institutional functions (Karuhanja, 2015). Performance is therefore not only a reflection of individual capability but also of organizational systems and culture.

### 2.2.3 Employee Commitment

According to Al Hakim et al. (2022) the attachment workers have to their employer is known as employee commitment. The same author go further to explain that loyal employees usually experience a connection to their organisation, a sense of comprehension of its goals, and a sense of belonging. These employees add value because they are more dedicated to their work, produce at a high rate, and offer help more proactively. The current study defines employee commitment as the emotional bond that forms between an individual and an organisation, motivating them to stay on staff and help the latter achieve its objectives. It is the sense of responsibility one has for the goals, purposes, and vision of the organisation to which they belong. Workers that are dedicated to their company are more likely to deliver quality work. Universities may encourage commitment by encouraging a feeling of community, offering chances for development, and praising staff members' efforts. Employee commitment is also defined as a psychological state that characterizes an employee's relationship with the organization, and it has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization.

Employee commitment consists of three components: affective, continuance and normative commitment (Meyer et al, 2020). Meyer and Allen (2004) suggested a three-dimensional attitudinal concept of organizational commitment: affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. Affective commitment refers to employees' psychological involvement and emotional attachment to the organization. Normative commitment mentions the ethical responsibility of employee to continue work for a longer period with the organization. Finally, continuance commitment refers to the recognition of employee for the expenditures related with quitting organization. Therefore, employees who have high levels of commitment to their organizations are expected to stay, for the reason that they wish to continue their affiliation, in direction to assist the goals of the organization (Meyer & Allen, 2004).

## 2.3 Empirical Review

Onyeka (2025) investigated the mediating role of employee commitment in bridging the relationship between talent management practices and academic staff performance within state-owned tertiary institutions in Bayelsa and Kogi States, Nigeria. Grounded in Human Capital Theory and Social Exchange Theory, the study employed proportionate stratified sampling, distributing 485 questionnaires with 408 valid responses analyzed via partial least squares structural equation modeling. Their findings indicated strong positive correlations between talent attraction,

development, retention and academic staff performance. Notably, employee commitment was found to significantly mediate the relationship between talent retention and academic staff performance. Similarly, Mokoena et al. (2022) conducted a quantitative study in a government department in South Africa to develop a framework linking talent management, organizational commitment and employee turnover intention. Using a non-probability sample of 372 participants, the study employed structural equation modeling to establish that talent management acted as a mediator between organizational commitment and turnover intention.

Ridwan et al. (2020) conducted a study in Indonesia to examine how employee performance at SPMI Private University in West Sumatra is influenced by perceived organizational support, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. The study adopted a purely quantitative approach and applied saturation sampling from a population of 241 employees, yielding a sample of 211. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 21.0 through path analysis, R-square determination, F-tests and t-tests. Hendri (2019) conducted research in Indonesia to investigate the influence of organizational commitment, multicultural competency and organizational fairness on employee job performance. The study employed an explanatory survey design and focused on civil servants across three administrative regions: Central Lampung Regency, East Lampung Regency, and Metro Municipality, with a sample of 350 employees. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), preceded by tests of normality, linearity, and regression significance. The findings revealed that while organizational competence had no direct impact on job performance, organizational commitment and organizational fairness significantly influenced both commitment and performance.

Uddin et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine the significance of individual employee engagement for team performance, focusing particularly on the mediating effects of employee commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. The study employed a quantitative methodology and utilized a multi-level research design. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire using convenience and snowball sampling, and analysis was conducted using SPSS 20 and SmartPLS 2, incorporating descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation, and structural equation modeling. The findings indicated that employee engagement significantly enhances team productivity, with organizational commitment and citizenship behavior acting as mediators in this relationship. Gul (2015) conducted a study in Pakistan to examine how employee commitment influences organizational development, using middle-level managers from various telecom companies in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as respondents. The study collected data from 370 participants using a simple random sampling technique and employed questionnaires as the sole instrument for primary data collection. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 20, and included regression and correlation analyses to determine the strength and significance of the relationship between employee commitment and organizational development. The results revealed that employee commitment significantly predicts organizational development.

Almeida et al. (2019) conducted a study in Southwest Europe to investigate how corporate reputation (CR), corporate image, and communication influence employee attitudes and behavior, particularly organizational commitment and individual performance, with corporate social responsibility (CSR) functioning as a moderating factor. The study utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) to test a theoretical model based on 473 valid questionnaires collected from employees of the largest cooperative dairy union in Iberia. The findings highlighted the significance of corporate image and reputation in strengthening employee attachment and improving performance, especially when CSR practices are perceived positively. Ridwan et al. (2020) used a quantitative survey design in Indonesian public universities, collecting data from 300 academic and administrative staff. Their structural equation modeling analysis revealed no significant moderating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between talent management and employee performance, despite a strong direct effect of talent management practices. The authors concluded that in public sector contexts, systemic HR frameworks may override individual attitudinal factors such as commitment. The following was the hypothesis of the current study:

*H<sub>05</sub>: Talent management does not significantly influence employee performance when moderated by employee commitment.*

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design and Approach

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design with a quantitative approach, underpinned by the pragmatic philosophical paradigm. This design and approach was adopted in the study because it allowed the researcher to collect data from many respondents at one specific point in time without influencing them making the study very objective and the findings reliable.



### 3.2 Target Population

The study targeted a population of 1,156 from the two selected public universities in Uganda. The target population included the Human Resource Directors, Council members, Top management, Teaching staff and Non-teaching staff of Kabale University and Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST).

### 3.3 Sample Size

The sample size was determined in two phases. The Human Resource directors and Top Management formed the first category and since their population was small (12), the researcher used census sampling to include all of them in the study. The second category consisted of the university council members, teaching staff and administrative staff which had a total population of 1144, researcher used the Yamane (1967) formulae to determine the sample size which yielded a sample of 308 respondents. Therefore the total sample size for the study was 320 respondents.

### 3.4 Sampling techniques:

Purposive sampling was used to select 12 respondents who were key informants in this study: Two (2) HR Directors and ten (10) senior management personnel. Additionally, simple random sampling was applied in order to categorize the rest of the responded and to ensure each one was given a chance to participate in the study; teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and University Council members.

### 3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Closed ended questionnaire consisting of 5-point Likert scale questions were used to collect primary data from the respondents. Quantitative data was then analyzed using Jeffreys’s Amazing Statistics Program (JASP) software to conduct Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which allowed for simultaneous estimation of multiple relationships between latent variables.

**Table 1**

*Population, Sample Size and Sampling Procedures*

Category of Respondents	Target Population	Sample Size	KAB	MUST	Sampling technique
HR Directors	2	2	1	1	Purposive Sampling
Top Management	10	10	5	5	Purposive Sampling
Council members	53	14	7	7	Simple Random Sampling
Teaching Staff	695	187	94	93	Simple Random Sampling
Non-teaching staff	396	107	54	53	Simple Random Sampling
<b>Total</b>	<b>1156</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>159</b>	

Source: Kabale University & MUST, HR Department Records, 2023; modified by the researcher.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Response Rate

A total of 320 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents across the two public universities in South Western Uganda and 320 were successfully completed and returned, yielding a 100% response rate for the intended sample size.

### 4.2 Quantitative Analysis

#### 4.2.1 Structural Equation Model (SEM) and Hypothesis testing

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) involves modeling the relationships between independent and dependent variables. In SEM, a hypothesized causal link from an independent variable to a dependent variable is depicted using a unidirectional arrow. Conversely, correlations among independent variables are illustrated with a double-headed arrow. The structural model, a key component of SEM, outlines the network of relationships among the constructs under investigation.

#### 4.2.2 Testing the Structural Model for Talent Management and Employee Performance Model fit:

The summary of fit indices for the academic staff model shows excellent fit with CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.015, RMSEA = 0.000 (90% CI [0.000, 0.019]), and NFI = 0.935, though SRMR = 0.108 is slightly elevated. For administrative staff, the model demonstrates good fit with CFI = 0.963, TLI = 0.954, NFI = 0.931, and RMSEA = 0.090 (90%), CI [0.071, 0.108]), with SRMR = 0.124 exceeding ideal thresholds. Compared to established



benchmarks, both models show strong incremental fit indices that exceed conventional thresholds (CFI/TLI > 0.90), with the academic staff model showing particularly strong absolute fit. With reference to accepted threshold values, both proposed models demonstrate good fit to the data, allowing us to proceed with evaluating the models' proposed relationships.

**Discriminant validity:** In this study, heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio was used to test for discriminant validity. HTMT is used to check whether constructs in the model are truly distinct from each other (not measuring the same thing). For academic staff, HTMT values ranged from 0.572 to 0.935, with the highest correlation observed between Talent Management (TM) and Talent Retention (TR) at 0.935, followed by Talent Attractiveness (TA) and Employee Performance (EPc) at 0.900. For administrative staff, HTMT values ranged from 0.727 to 0.989, with the highest correlation between Talent Management (TM) and Talent Retention (TR) at 0.989, followed by Employee Commitment (EC) and Talent Retention (TR) at 0.959. While all values remain below the threshold of 1.0, indicating discriminant validity is established for both groups, the administrative staff model shows higher HTMT ratios overall, suggesting constructs are more closely related in this group. The academic staff model demonstrates better discriminant validity, particularly between Talent Development (TD) and other constructs, with values as low as 0.572 (TD-TA).

**Table 2**  
*Testing the Structural Model for Talent Management and Employee Performance - Academic staff Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio*

TA	TM	TD	TR	EC	EPc
1.000					
0.891	1.000				
0.572	0.732	1.000			
0.841	0.935	0.913	1.000		
0.876	0.812	0.636	0.869	1.000	
0.900	0.662	0.766	0.774	0.638	1.000

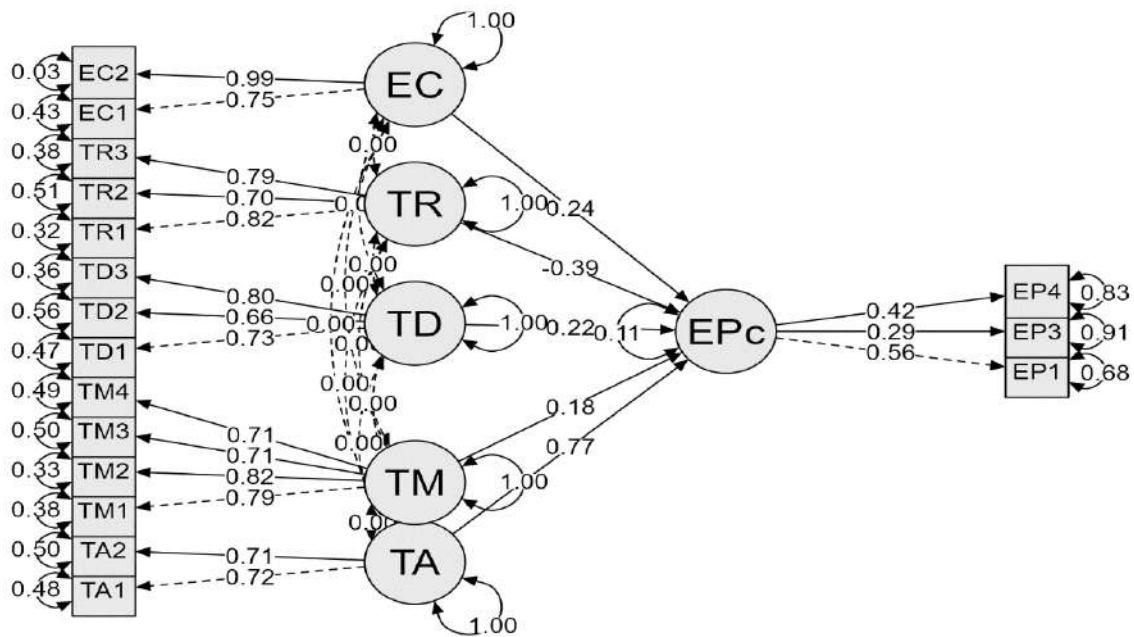
**Table 3**  
*Testing the Structural Model for Talent Management and Employee Performance - Administrative staff Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio*

TA	TM	TD	TR	EC	EPd
1.000					
0.931	1.000				
0.861	0.924	1.000			
0.912	0.989	0.916	1.000		
0.885	0.941	0.812	0.959	1.000	
0.906	0.857	0.727	0.760	0.888	1.000

The heterotrait-monotrait analysis from tables 2 and 3 above reveals that all ratio values fall below the critical threshold of 1.0 for both academic and administrative staff models. This confirms satisfactory discriminant validity between the constructs under investigation.

**4.2.3 Structural Model**

The structural models for the Talent Management and Employee performance for academic and administrative staff are shown in Figure 1 and 2 below.



**Figure 1**  
The Structural Model for Academic staff -Talent Management Practices and Employee Performance.

**Table 4**  
Total effects of the structural model for academic staff - Talent Management Practices and Employee Performance

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence interval	
					Lower	Upper
TA → EPc	0.77	0.071	6.107	< .001	0.296	0.576
TM → EPc	0.18	0.047	1.783	0.075	-0.008	0.176
TD → EPc	0.22	0.042	2.082	0.037	0.005	0.168
TR → EPc	-0.39	0.042	-3.695	< .001	-0.237	-0.073
EC → EPc	0.24	0.036	2.485	0.013	0.019	0.159

The total effects from the structural model for academic staff revealed that talent attractiveness ( $\beta = 0.77, p < .001$ ) had a strong and statistically significant influence on employee performance, indicating that the ability of universities to attract talent substantially improved performance outcomes. Talent motivation ( $\beta = 0.18, p = 0.075$ ) showed a positive but statistically insignificant relationship, suggesting that motivational initiatives alone were not sufficient to drive significant improvements in performance among academic staff. Talent development ( $\beta = 0.22, p = 0.037$ ) was found to significantly enhance performance, underscoring the importance of continuous professional growth opportunities. Interestingly, talent retention ( $\beta = -0.39, p < .001$ ) had a significant negative effect, implying that retention challenges, such as high turnover intentions or dissatisfaction, undermined performance. Lastly, employee commitment ( $\beta = 0.24, p = 0.013$ ) demonstrated a significant positive contribution, emphasizing that higher commitment levels among academic staff translated into better performance. Conclusively, Effective performance of academic staff in public universities is largely driven by how attractive the institutions are, how well they support development, and how committed staff feel. However, weak motivation systems and problematic retention strategies may undermine performance despite other gains.

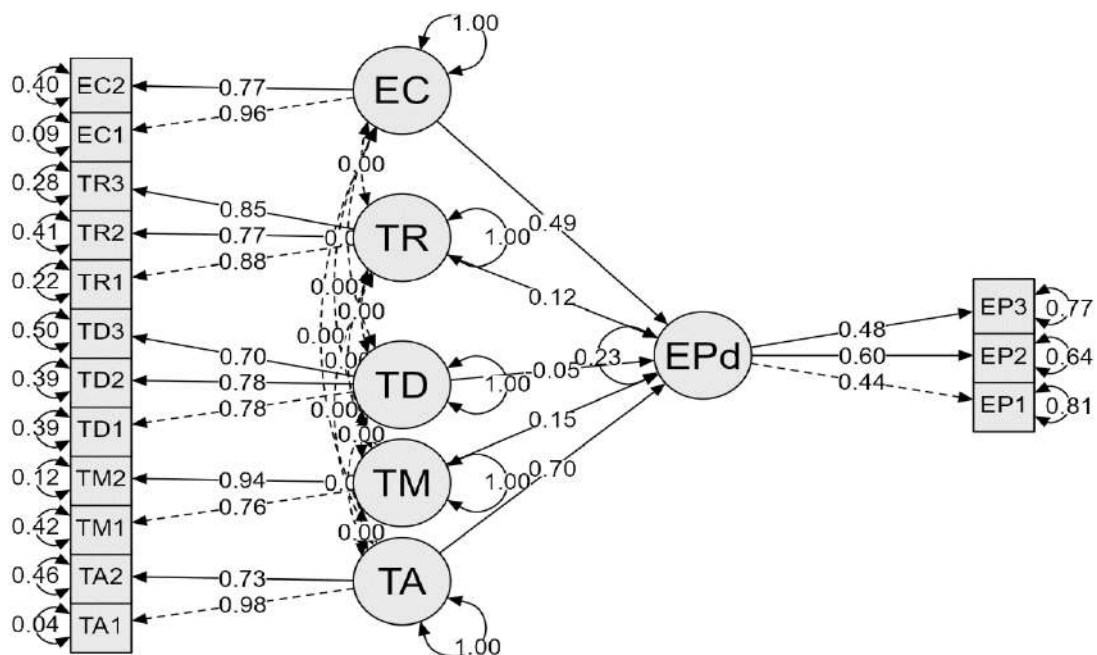


**Table 5**

*Fit indices for academic staff - Talent Management Practices and Employee Performance*

Index	Value
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.995
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.985
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.985
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.988
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.329
Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI)	0.965
Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.995
Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI)	0.995
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.044
RMSEA 90% CI lower bound	0.000
RMSEA 90% CI upper bound	0.172
RMSEA p-value	0.308
Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)	0.019
Hoelter's critical N ( $\alpha = .05$ )	318.704
Hoelter's critical N ( $\alpha = .01$ )	489.388
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.990
McDonald fit index (MFI)	0.996
Expected cross validation index (ECVI)	0.104
Log-likelihood	-639.915
Number of free parameters	8.000
Akaike (AIC)	1295.830
Bayesian (BIC)	1321.679
Sample-size adjusted Bayesian (SSABIC)	1296.339

*Path diagram*



**Figure 2**

*The Structural Model for Administrative Staff Talent Management and Employee Performance*



**Table 6**

*Total effects of the structural model for administrative staff- Talent Management Practices and Employee Performance*

	Std. Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence interval	
					Lower	Upper
TA → EPd	0.702	0.091	7.687	< .001	0.523	0.881
TM → EPd	0.150	0.100	1.501	0.133	-0.046	0.346
TD → EPd	-0.054	0.105	-0.511	0.609	-0.260	0.153
TR → EPd	0.123	0.100	1.228	0.219	-0.074	0.320
EC → EPd	0.489	0.098	5.010	< .001	0.298	0.681

**Table 7**

*Model Fit indices for administrative staff- Talent Management Practices and Employee Performance*

Index	Value
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.963
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.954
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.954
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.931
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.745
Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI)	0.914
Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.963
Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI)	0.963
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.070
RMSEA 90% CI lower bound	0.071
RMSEA 90% CI upper bound	0.108
RMSEA p-value	6.484×10 <sup>-4</sup>
Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)	0.032
Hoelter's critical N (α = .05)	82.209
Hoelter's critical N (α = .01)	90.347
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.996
McDonald fit index (MFI)	0.714
Expected cross validation index (ECVI)	2.083

**4.2.4 Path Coefficients for the Direct Hypothesized Relationships**

The path coefficients for the direct hypothesized relationships within the proposed study model are shown in Table 8 and 8 below.

**Table 8:**

*Path Coefficients for the Direct Hypothesized Relationships within the Proposed Study Model - Academic Staff*

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient/Std. estimate	p-value	Decision
H <sub>01</sub>	TA → EP	0.774	0.045	Reject H <sub>01</sub>
H <sub>02</sub>	TM → EP	0.182	0.075	Reject H <sub>02</sub>
H <sub>03</sub>	TD → EP	0.221	0.037	Reject H <sub>03</sub>
H <sub>04</sub>	TR → EP	-0.386	< .001	Reject H <sub>04</sub>
H <sub>05</sub>	EC → EP	0.240	0.013	Reject H <sub>05</sub>

**Table 9**

*Path Coefficients for the Direct Hypothesized Relationships within the Proposed Study Model - Administrative Staff*

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient/Std. estimate	p-value	Decision
H <sub>01</sub>	TA → EP	0.702	<.001	Reject H <sub>01</sub>
H <sub>02</sub>	TM → EP	0.150	0.133	Failed to reject H <sub>02</sub>
H <sub>03</sub>	TD → EP	-0.054	0.609	Failed to reject H <sub>03</sub>
H <sub>04</sub>	TR → EP	0.412	0.219	Failed to reject H <sub>04</sub>
H <sub>05</sub>	EC → EP	0.489	<.001	Reject H <sub>05</sub>

*Note: TA = Talent Attractiveness; TM = Talent Management; TD = Talent Development; TR = Talent Retention; EP = Employee Performance; EC= Employee Commitment*



### 4.3 To Examine the Moderation Effect of Employee Commitment on the Relationship between Talent Management Practices and Employee Performance.

The moderation effect analysis of employee commitment on the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance shows a clear difference between academic and administrative staff. The results are as presented in the tables below:

#### 4.3.1 Moderation Effect of Employee Commitment for Administrative Staff

Findings on the moderation effect of employee commitment on the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance for administrative staff are presented in the Table below.

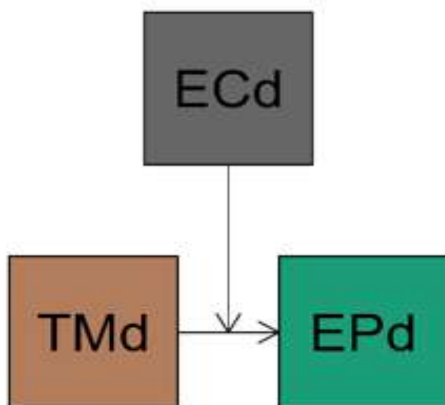
**Table 10**

*Moderation Effect of Employee Commitment for Administrative Staff Model Summary*

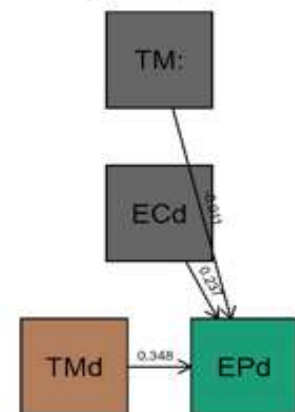
	Hayes number <sup>a</sup>	AIC	AIC weight	BIC	BIC weight	Log-likelihood	n	R <sup>2</sup>
Model 1	1	892.411	1.000	921.314	1.000	-436.205	133	0.501

<sup>a</sup> Model configuration number defined by Hayes (2022)

**Path plot**



**Statistical path plot**



**Figure 1**

*Moderation Effect of Employee Commitment for Administrative Staff*

**Table 11**

*Moderation Effect of Employee Commitment for Administrative Staff Path Coefficients*

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence interval		Std. Estimate
					Lower	Upper	
TMd → EPd	0.348	0.161	2.161	0.031	0.032	0.663	0.459
ECd → EPd	0.237	0.148	1.595	0.111	-0.054	0.527	0.386
TMd:ECd → EPd	-0.011	0.040	-0.268	0.789	-0.089	0.068	-0.012

Results from the table above, indicated that talent management significantly improved administrative staff performance ( $\beta = 0.348$ ,  $p = 0.031$ ), with a moderate standardized effect (0.459). In contrast, employee commitment alone did not significantly influence performance ( $\beta = 0.237$ ,  $p = 0.111$ ), as its confidence interval crossed zero. Furthermore, the interaction term (TMd × ECd → EPd) was insignificant ( $\beta = -0.011$ ,  $p = 0.789$ ), suggesting that employee commitment did not moderate the relationship between talent management and employee performance. These findings imply that, for administrative staff, the effect of talent management on performance is direct and robust, independent of employee commitment levels.



**Table 12**

*Moderation Effect of Employee Commitment for Administrative Staff Direct and Indirect Effects*

	ECd	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence interval		Std. Estimate
						Lower	Upper	
TMd → EPd	16	0.314	0.085	3.684	< .001	0.147	0.482	0.415
TMd → EPd	50	0.306	0.086	3.537	< .001	0.136	0.475	0.404
TMd → EPd	84	0.298	0.097	3.074	0.002	0.108	0.488	0.393

From the table above; Direct Effect of Talent Management Practices on Performance (TMd → EPd): Across all levels of employee commitment (16, 50, 84), the estimates are positive (0.298–0.314), showing that talent management consistently improves administrative staff performance. All effects are statistically significant ( $z = 3.074–3.684$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Confidence intervals (0.108–0.488) do not cross zero, confirming robustness. Moderation by Employee Commitment: The effect size decreases slightly as employee commitment levels rise (0.415 → 0.393 standardized estimates). This means employee commitment does not strengthen or weaken the effect in any meaningful way; the relationship remains positive and significant at all commitment levels.

The implication of the above results is that; for administrative staff, talent management is a strong and direct driver of performance. Employee commitment has minimal moderating influence, suggesting that even with different levels of commitment, talent management still significantly enhances performance. “Talent management had a significant positive effect on administrative staff performance ( $\beta \approx 0.30–0.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with employee commitment showing little to no moderating influence.” The indirect effect shows how the strength of TMd → EPd changes when employee commitment (ECd) interacts with TMd. Here, we see that the conditional direct effects remain positive and significant across all ECd levels ( $\beta = 0.314 \rightarrow 0.298$ ). The indirect/moderated effect is minimal, because the estimates barely change (0.415 → 0.393).

Interpretation of Indirect Effects: The indirect effects through moderation are very small, meaning that employee commitment does not significantly alter the impact of talent management on performance. Whether employee commitment is low, moderate, or high, talent management has a direct, positive, and significant impact on administrative staff performance. “The indirect effects of employee commitment were negligible, as talent management consistently and significantly improved administrative staff performance across all levels of commitment.”

**4.3.2 Moderation Effect of Employee Commitment for Academic Staff**

Findings on the moderation effect of employee commitment on the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance for academic staff are presented in Table 13 below.

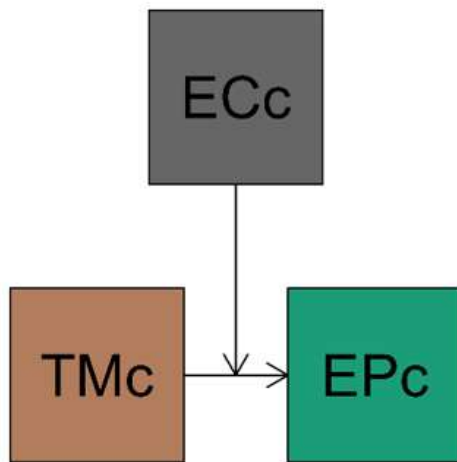
**Table 13**

*Moderation Effect of Employee Commitment for Academic Staff Model Summary*

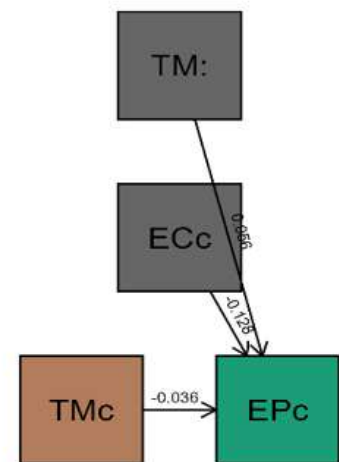
	Hayes number <sup>a</sup>	AIC	AIC weight	BIC	BIC weight	Log-likelihood	n	R <sup>2</sup>
Model 1	1	920.988	1.000	953.299	1.000	-450.494	187	0.159

<sup>a</sup> Model configuration number defined by Hayes (2022)

Model Plot



Statistical path plot



**Figure 4**  
*Moderation Effect of Employee Commitment for Academic Staff*

**Table 14**  
*Moderation Effect of Employee Commitment for Academic Staff Path Coefficients*

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence interval	
					Lower	Upper
TMc → EPc	-0.036	0.212	-0.171	0.864	-0.452	0.379
ECc → EPc	-0.128	0.168	-0.765	0.445	-0.458	0.201
TMc:ECc→ EPc	0.056	0.049	1.138	0.255	-0.041	0.153

The path coefficient results showed that talent management had no significant effect on academic staff performance ( $\beta = -0.036, p = 0.864$ ), and employee commitment also showed no significant direct influence ( $\beta = -0.128, p = 0.445$ ). Furthermore, the interaction between talent management and employee commitment was statistically insignificant ( $\beta = 0.056, p = 0.255$ ), with the confidence intervals including zero in all cases. These findings suggest that, unlike administrative staff, the relationship between talent management and performance for academic staff is not moderated by employee commitment.

**Table 15**  
*Moderation Effect of Employee Commitment for Academic Staff Direct and indirect effects*

	ECc	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence interval	
						Lower	Upper
TMc → EPc	16	0.151	0.075	1.996	0.046	0.003	0.298
TMc → EPc	50	0.189	0.066	2.873	0.004	0.060	0.318
TMc → EPc	84	0.224	0.071	3.151	0.002	0.085	0.363

From the table above; at low levels of commitment (16th percentile): The effect of talent management on performance is positive and significant (Estimate = 0.151,  $p = 0.046$ ; CI = 0.003–0.298). At moderate levels of commitment (50th percentile/median): The effect remains positive and stronger (Estimate = 0.189,  $p = 0.004$ ; CI = 0.060–0.318). At high levels of commitment (84th percentile): The effect is even stronger and highly significant (Estimate = 0.224,  $p = 0.002$ ; CI = 0.085–0.363). This shows that employee commitment strengthens the positive effect of talent management on performance.

The findings revealed that employee commitment significantly moderated the relationship between talent management practices and the performance of academic staff in public universities. Specifically, at low levels of commitment, the effect of talent management on performance was positive but relatively weak, while at moderate and high levels of commitment, the effect became progressively stronger and highly significant. This implies that

employee commitment amplifies the effectiveness of talent management initiatives in enhancing academic staff performance. In practical terms, universities that cultivate high levels of commitment among staff are likely to realize greater returns from their talent management investments.

#### 4.4 Discussion

The null hypothesis stated that employee commitment does not significantly moderate the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance. The results from this study support this hypothesis for both academic and administrative staff in public universities. The quantitative results of this study revealed that the moderating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance was not statistically significant for either administrative or academic staff in Ugandan public universities. Specifically, for administrative staff, the interaction effect was not significant ( $z = -0.268$ ,  $p = 0.789$ ), although the direct effect of talent management on performance was statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.348$ ,  $z = 2.161$ ,  $p = 0.031$ ), and the total effect remained strong ( $\beta = 0.314$ ,  $z = 3.684$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that talent management practices such as attraction, development, retention, and motivation directly improved administrative staff performance, regardless of commitment levels.

Similarly, for academic staff, the moderation effect was also statistically insignificant ( $z = 1.138$ ,  $p = 0.255$ ). However, the total effect of talent management on performance appeared stronger at higher levels of employee commitment, indicating that although commitment did not significantly moderate the relationship, it may have enhanced the effectiveness of talent management in improving academic staff performance.

These findings challenge common assumptions in existing literature, which frequently position employee commitment as a key moderating or mediating variable. For example, Ridwan et al. (2020) and Hendri (2019) found that commitment significantly enhanced job performance, while Uddin et al. (2019) emphasized its mediating role between engagement and team productivity. Gul (2015) established a strong link between commitment and organizational development, and Otoo et al. (2019) noted that engagement in talent management initiatives promoted commitment. However, in the current study, such effects were not supported in the context of Ugandan public universities.

The results can be understood through the lens of two theoretical frameworks: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and the Egalitarian Theory of Talent Management (Iles et al., 2010). According to Maslow, employees are more committed and perform better when institutions address needs across all five levels physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization (Otoo et al., 2019). Therefore, talent management practices that provide fair compensation, recognition, job security, and opportunities for growth may directly lead to improved performance, even in the absence of strong commitment. Likewise, the Egalitarian Theory posits that all employees possess talent and deserve equal opportunities for development. In public universities, where equitable treatment is emphasized, inclusive and systemic HR practices may have a more immediate and universal impact on performance than individual attitudinal variables like commitment.

Supporting this interpretation, Onyeka (2025) argued that in bureaucratic institutions such as public universities, performance is more likely to be influenced by organizational structures and systems than by individual motivations. Mokoena et al. (2022) further asserted that effective talent management could drive productivity even in low-commitment environments. These perspectives align with the current findings, indicating that institutional frameworks may exert a stronger influence than personal commitment in the Ugandan public sector context. Contrastingly, the findings deviate from those of Ridwan et al. (2022), Hendri (2019), and Uddin et al. (2019), who consistently identified significant moderating or mediating roles for commitment. For example, Ridwan et al. (2022) emphasized that commitment enhanced motivation and engagement, while Hendri (2019) linked commitment to job effectiveness and citizenship behavior. These contradictions may be attributable to contextual differences. As Almeida et al. (2019) noted, commitment played a more prominent role in private or competitive sectors where individual agency and motivation are critical to performance outcomes. In resource-constrained or highly structured public universities, however, institutional policies and equitable talent management frameworks may overshadow individual attitudes.

To conclude, while employee commitment remains an important variable in the broader HR-performance framework, this study found no statistically significant moderating effect in the context of Ugandan public universities. The direct implementation of comprehensive, fair, and inclusive talent management practices appeared to be a more consistent and reliable driver of employee performance. This suggests that for performance outcomes to improve, especially in the public sector, institutions should focus on strengthening systemic HR practices that meet employees' core needs. Commitment, although valuable, cannot substitute for structural support, recognition, and institutional fairness.

## V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

The results showed that employee commitment did not significantly moderate the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance for both academic staff and administrative staff. However, the direct effect of talent management remained strong. This suggests that commitment, while conceptually important, may not currently be robust enough in these institutions to influence performance outcomes meaningfully. This could stem from low morale, inadequate recognition or lack of participatory decision-making. The study concludes that employee commitment does not significantly moderate the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance for both academic and administrative staff. However, the direct effects of talent management practices on performance remain strong, particularly for administrative staff.

This implies that while commitment is important, its role as a moderator may be less pronounced in this context. Employee commitment does not significantly moderate the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance for either academic or administrative staff in public universities. The direct effect of talent management on performance remains the primary driver of outcomes in both groups. Commitment alone, without robust and equitable talent management, is not enough to drive substantial performance gains. Qualitative evidence indicates that staff view commitment as important for engagement and output, but structural barriers and inconsistent support can limit its impact. Employee commitment is valuable but does not significantly alter the effect of talent management on performance. Direct, inclusive, and well-implemented talent management strategies remain the most effective way to improve employee performance in public universities.

### 5.2 Recommendations

Since employee commitment did not significantly moderate the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance, universities should focus on strengthening talent management initiatives directly. While fostering employee commitment remains important, efforts should prioritize implementing effective attraction, development, motivation and retention strategies that independently drive performance improvements. Public universities should focus on creating a supportive environment where staff feel appreciated, involved and respected. This can be done through fair recognition, open communication, leadership support and including staff in making decisions that affect their growth. When employees feel that their needs and contributions matter, they are more likely to commit and perform better.

Therefore, building strong commitment should be a planned part of managing talent, not something we assume is already there. While employee commitment does not significantly moderate the relationship between talent management and performance, fostering commitment remains important for engagement and morale. Strengthen talent management practices such as fair recruitment, recognition, and professional development to directly enhance performance and indirectly support higher commitment. Apply all talent management strategies inclusively, ensuring that both academic and administrative staff have equal opportunities to develop commitment and contribute to institutional goals. Address structural and resource-related barriers that can undermine commitment, such as inadequate funding, heavy workloads, and limited recognition. Use regular staff engagement surveys to monitor levels of commitment and identify areas for improvement in talent management practices.

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