STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION: A CASE STUDY OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

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UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
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DECLARATION

I Nabwire Josephine N., affirm that this report has been prepared and submitted as part of the requirements for the Bachelor of Human Resource Management degree. It represents my original work, and all sources consulted have been duly acknowledged through in-text citations and a comprehensive reference list.

Signed.. Date....31 · 03 · 2026........................

APPROVAL STATEMENT

The research titled "Effects of Staff Development Programs on Employee Retention: A Case Study at Uganda Christian University." Has been reviewed and approved for submission.

Mr. Kibuuka David

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Signature ....

Date ...31/MARCH/2026...

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ABSTRACT

Staff development programs have become a crucially important human resource strategy in the modern world. Organizations depend on them in order to improve employee competence, organizational commitment and retention. The main aim of this study was to examine the effects of staff development programs on employee retention at Uganda Christian University, Mukono campus.

The key staff development strategies which were considered included training and development, mentorship, coaching, and career development opportunities. A quantitative research approach using a descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted. Structured questionnaires were randomly distributed to university staff, and their responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and linear regression in SPSS. Out of the 162 questionnaires that were distributed, 117 valid responses were analyzed.

The findings indicated that there is moderate implementation of staff development programs at UCU and that the employees generally perceive them positively. However, respondents also pointed out key challenges affecting the effectiveness of these programs. These included limited resources, heavy workloads and unequal access to development opportunities. The results further revealed moderately high levels of employee retention within the institution. Inferential analysis showed that there is a moderate positive relationship between staff development programs and employee retention ($r = 0.427$, $p < 0.05$). This was a sign that improvements in staff development initiatives significantly increased employees' likelihood of remaining within the institution. Regression analysis indicated that staff development initiatives are a potential predictor of retention at UCU, Mukono campus.

The study concluded that staff development programs significantly contribute to employee retention at UCU. It recommended that the university management strengthen staff development policies through adequate funding, equitable access and regular evaluation to enhance their effectiveness and support long term staff retention.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA………………………. Analysis of variance
CH…………………………Challenges
EFF……………………………Effects
HEIS…………………Higher Education Institutions
HR……………………Human Resource
HRD………………………Human Resource Development
HRM…………………Human Resource Management
ICT……………………Information and Communication Technology
IT………………………Information Technology
NCHE………………National Council for Higher Education
RT………………………………Retention
SD…………………………Standard Deviations
SDPs………………Staff Development Programs
SDS…………………………Staff Development Strategies
SPSS………………………Statistical Package for Social Sciences
T&D……………………Training and Development
UCU…………………Uganda Christian University

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0. Introduction

Staff development programs have been observed to positively influence employee retention and performance at various organizations from various sectors (Saari & Judge, 2004). This study was designed to determine the influence of some selected staff development programs on employee retention at Uganda Christian University, an Institution of Higher Learning in a resource-poor country.

1.1. Background of the study

One of the core HR priorities in modern human resource management (HRM), and especially in higher education institutions is staff development. According to Armstrong (2019), the primary aims of Staff Development Programs (SDPs) are to improve employee performance, increase job satisfaction and build a higher level of organizational commitment. In the modern day, the economy is knowledge based and universities depend on the quality and permanence of their academic and administrative staff members to accomplish institutional goals. Due to this, many higher education institutions, Uganda Christian University inclusive, have realized that continuous learning and professional development of their staff are key to maintaining high levels of academic excellence and sustainable performance.

Globally, the concept of staff development in HEIs started at the end of the last century. Universities began to systematically introduce professional development activities due to the intensified competition for academics (Wilson, 2019). At first it was mainly informal, through in-house workshops and mentorship, but it developed over the years into structured programs focusing on areas such as leadership development, research capacity building, and digital skills (Garavan et al., 2021).

In Africa, liberalisation of higher education during the late twentieth century brought about the springing up of private universities, including UCU in 1997. While this expanded access to HE for many people, it intensified competition among the sprouting institutions for qualified personnel (NCHE, 2022). Demand for experienced academic

administrators, and technical support staff rose sharply, pushing many HEIs into staff turnover challenges because they were losing employees to other institutions offering better conditions, remuneration, and development opportunities to employees, not only from private but also public institutions.

Today, staff development is seen as one of the key functions of strategic HRM, emphasizing on acquisition of skills as well as the role of motivation and employee engagement (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

Employee retention has emerged as one of the greatest HR challenges among universities in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) of Uganda in 2022, HEIs in Uganda lose approximately 22% of their academic staff annually due to turnover, with the private institutions suffering the greatest losses. A number of factors contribute to this phenomenon. The first one is lack of career development opportunities; most academics perceive limited room for promotion and personal development, making them lose motivation and seek opportunities elsewhere (Mwesigwa, 2020). The second is inadequate compensation and benefits in comparison to public institutions and international organizations (Baryamureeba & Ssentamu, 2018). Third is the work load; large student-teacher ratio and administrative tasks usually drain the staff, leading to burnout and reduced job satisfaction (Kim & Lee, 2017). The fourth one is the presence of poor leadership in the working environment which is perceived as causing poor communication, lack of participation in decision making, and lack of recognition (Allen et al., 2018).

UCU's internal data (UCU HR Dashboard, 2023) reveals that only 45% of the staff members regularly participate in annual development programs, highlighting a significant gap between what institutions offer and employee engagement. Specific departments such as IT and Finance have high turnover rates due to the demand of technical skills in the labor market, demonstrating that the problem of staff retention is multi-dimensional.

There are four main types of staff development programs; professional and pedagogical training, leadership and management development, research capacity building, and IT and digital skills development (Noe et al., 2020). Other categories include; mentorship and coaching programs, job rotation, and study leave to enable postgraduate training.

Employees who attend well-designed and relevant training program feel that they have a clear role to play and can perform them competently. This reduces feelings of work frustration, stress and performance anxiety (Noe et al., 2020; Salas et., 2012). This high sense of efficacy translates into high levels of job satisfaction; employees feel the need to stay with the organization because they gain so much from it.

Coaching addresses the development of staff on an individual level. This helps them to hone their skills by providing them with timely feedbacks and guided assistance to solve problems (Ellinger et al., 2011). Usually this occurs between an employee and a supervisor and is geared toward improved performance, meeting goals, and handling particular tasks and assignments. The tailored support provided by coaching signal that the institution cares about employee's growth and makes the employee feel more loyal to the organization and strengthen employee-organization relationship bonds.

Through mentorship, less experienced employees receive support, guidance, and networking opportunities and learning of the organization's culture from more experienced colleagues, enhancing social integration within the institution (Allen et al., 2004). Employees feel that they belong to a larger institution thereby reducing job isolation and increasing the likelihood of staying within the institution.

Career development involves planned programs to support career paths of employees, they can be through promotions, postgraduate studies support, leadership preparation and research training development. One reason for high turnover rates in HEIs is perceived lack of career development (De Vos & Meganck, 2009). Employees would stay more within the organization if they can clearly visualize their future with it. Without adequate future growth within the organization employees feel neglected and leave (Nakanwagi 2019).

These employee development practices play a vital role in retention because they satisfy both the professional and psychological needs of staff members. Training contributes to competence, coaching provides support, mentorship can create a sense of belonging, and career development shows employees their future potential. By meeting all these employee needs employees can feel a greater affiliation to institutional goals, fairness within the employment relationship, and greater loyalty to the institution.

Several scholars have argued that effective SDPs would greatly contribute to the retention of employees (Park & Kim, 2015; Allen et al., 2018) and numerous HR theories aim to explain why such development activities promote the retention of employees. Social exchange theory asserts that employees will feel an increased level of loyalty and commitment if they feel that their institution has made an investment in their development (Blau, 1964). In other words, by providing employees with opportunities for growth, the institution can cultivate a mutual obligation with its staff.

Human capital theory explains retention by showing that development and training increase an employees' value by enhancing their skills and productivity (Becker, 1993) and therefore boosting their job satisfaction. Similarly, there is evidence of empirical studies indicating that professional development enhances the retention of employees by increasing job satisfaction and organizational identification (Kim & Lee, 2017). Employees who believe they are provided with the necessary skills and support are more likely to contribute positively to the institution and leadership/mentorship opportunities at HEIs create a positive workplace where employees are given recognition and can build an affiliation towards the institution's mission and vision (Wilson, 2019). Such development opportunities provide employees with the avenue for their self-actualization and professional fulfillment.

For UCU and other Ugandan HEIs multiple SDPs clearly present a commitment on the part of HEIs to facilitate employee growth (Nagita et al., 2025), however employee participation in such programs are rather low and their impact on retention remains undefined. The relevance, accessibility and perceived benefits of these programs need to be explored. Thus, to increase retention in HEIs SDPs need to be not just available but tailored to meet employees' ambitions, organizational goals and resources (Hassan et al., 2022).

1.2. Statement of the problem

The existence of competent and committed staff is essential for HEIs to provide quality teaching and research, and for the success of these institutions (Judith 2015). However, HEIs are also prone to high rates of employee turnover due intense competition for scarce labor. This is detrimental to their success in the long run. UCU has tried to address employee competence and retention through staff development programs including training, coaching, mentoring and career development. Despite this, staff turnover persists suggesting limited effectiveness of these programs (Nakanjako 2014). This is similar to issues within other organizations with a lack of resources, limited time, and poor follow up and support from leaders thus limiting employee development and effectiveness (Brian 2021; Derek 2020).

Sometimes staff development is not linked to employee careers, it is sometimes inconsistent especially among contract-based staff leading to perceptions of unequal opportunities and organizational support (Mugwanya 2009; Nasanga 2002; Emma, 2016; Nafula 2025). Consequently, employees do not derive much from these programs and this lowers their motivation and organizational commitment, promoting their intention to leave (Adong 2003; Husnah 2022). Since staff development is widely seen as an important factor to improving retention, an empirical approach should examine whether and how staff development programs at UCU are useful for employees and to improve retention.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1. Main objective

The main objective of this study was to examine the effects of staff development programs on staff retention at Uganda Christian University.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to;

1. Find out staff development strategies at UCU.
2. Examine staff retention levels at UCU.
3. Find out the challenges and suggest possible solutions to staff development at UCU.

1.4. Research questions

1. Which staff development strategies are employed at UCU?
2. What are the staff retention levels at UCU?
3. What are the challenges and possible solutions to staff development at UCU?
4. What is the relationship between staff development and employee retention at UCU?

1.5. Scope of the study

1.5.1. Content scope

This study focused on the effects of staff development programs on retention at UCU. The staff development programs considered were training and development (T&D), coaching, mentorship, and career development programs. These staff development programs are a key component of performance management and their effectiveness can influence employees’ job satisfaction and decision to stay or leave.

1.5.2. Geographical scope

The study was conducted at Uganda Christian University's main campus in Bugujju Central Division, Mukono Municipality, Mukono District, Central Region, Uganda · 0° 21' 17" N · 32° 44' 41" E · 0.355,32.745 ·

1.5.3. Time scope

The study questionnaire focused on a period of five years so as to capture the pre pandemic baseline, COVID adaptations and the post pandemic recovery to balance relevance, data quality and feasibility to ensure that the findings are actionable for UCU's current HR policies. The research was conducted between October 2025 and January 2026.

1.6. Justification of the study

This study was justified by the need to understand the effects of staff development programs on retention in higher education institutions. This is because staff retention and turnover are directly linked to the consistent performance of HEIs. The findings of this study contributed to the existing body of knowledge on staff development and retention.

1.7. Significance of the study

This study will be important to the human resource practitioners, policy makers and scholars at large as explained below.

It is anticipated that this study will guide Human resource teams in amending their staff development programs as it outlines to them on how to train, mentor, coach and develop their careers through organizations' opportunities. Through doing this, it is hoped that the Human resource team could prevent productive employees from leaving the organization, hence saving financial resources on hiring new staff, and keeping employees stable and happy.

This study is expected to offer new perspectives on how staff development programs reduce employee turnover within the institutions in Uganda. Students and Researchers can use it as a foundation for their future research on performance appraisals and employee turnover.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Staff Development Programs

Obioma (2006) views staff development as an organizational effort to help employees acquire skills needed for efficient job performance. Ivancevich (2010) defines staff development as a process that provides employees the information, skills, and understanding necessary to contribute to organizational goals. Nwachukwu (2009) expands on this describing staff development as activities that expose employees to new duties and opportunities for advancement within the organization. Fenstermacher and Berliner (1985) and Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) in their context of higher education, define staff development as activities that strengthen teachers' knowledge, skills and conceptions leading to changes in their teaching practices and improved student learning.

Staff development encompasses all activities aimed at improving employees' professional knowledge, skills and attitudes to enhance effectiveness and the organization's overall success. Staff development refers to the processes, programs and activities through which every organization develops, enhances and improves the skills, competencies and overall performance of its employees. It is a process that consists of orientation, in service education and continuing education for the people of promoting the development of personnel within any employment setting, consistent with the goals and responsibilities of the employment.

Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between staff development programs and employee retention. According to Allen et al. (2018), staff development programs can significantly impact employee retention by enhancing job satisfaction, improving performance, and increasing organizational commitment.

2.2. Training and development

Training and development is primary in influencing job satisfaction of employees, work improvement and reward distribution. Training and development (T&D) is a systematic approach to developing and enhancing employee skills, abilities and knowledge for the purpose of increasing organizational effectiveness (Aguinus and Kraiger, 2009). As an overarching HR practice, it is often considered and evidenced, to be a broad collection of activities that refer to continual learning and development of general job- and career-related skills (Boon et al., 2011).

Aguinus and Kraiger (2009) demonstrate that perceived T&D is associated with higher levels of retention, as T&D strengthens the social exchange relationship between the employee and their employer (Dysvik and Kuvaas, 2008). More recently, researchers have become interested in understanding the exact mechanisms that underlie this relationship. For example, Koster et al (2011) demonstrated that job satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between perceived support in employee development and intention to quit.

In contrast, Dysvik and Kuvaas (2008) showed that intrinsic motivation partially mediated the relationship between perceived T&D and turnover intention. While these studies have enhanced our understanding of how T&D is related to retention, exploring mediators individually is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it encourages researchers to add potential mediators into the literature with little consideration of how they are differentiated from others. Therefore, there may be a number that overlap conceptually, which makes it difficult to clarify the exact processes through which perceived T&D influences employee retention.

Secondly, examining mediators in isolation limits the degree to which we can be sure that the mediator is practically important. Some may overpower others or have specific effects and so it is crucial to include a comprehensive range of potential mediators within analyses in order to untangle the mechanism through which perceived T&D influences retention. This study attempts to address these issues by applying and testing a model of job-related affect that we propose mediates the relationship between perceived T&D and intention to stay.

This study seeks to contribute to the literature on T&D in at least two ways. First, it will introduce Russell’s (1980) model of core affect as a suitable framework for identifying a ‘full’ range of work attitudes that are associated with both T&D and employee retention.

Although a multitude of work attitudes have been identified within the literature, there is no overarching framework that organizes them according to their affective properties. This study will categorize work attitudes into four groups based on the quadrants of Russell's (1980) model. More specifically, the work attitudes of job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, employee engagement and change-related anxiety each occupy a specific quadrant.

Second, this framework will be applied to better understand the cognitive-affective pathways through which perceived T&D impact on intentions to stay. Researchers have begun to integrate cognitive and affective theories to better understand the processes through which perceptions of the work and organizational environment lead to attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (e.g. Colquitt et al, 2013). This is because individuals appraise events cognitively as well as emotionally (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Therefore, an integrated perspective is needed in order to fully understand the processes that link perceptions of the organizational environment, such as T&D, with important employee outcomes, such as retention.

The study will therefore integrate Russell’s (1980) affect-based model with the job demands-resources model (JD-R; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli, 2001; Bakker and Demerouti, 2008) to suggest that employees will cognitively evaluate the degree to which T&D has influenced the job demands and resources present in the work environment, and will emotionally respond to having received T&D within their organization.

This study will also contribute to practice because clarifying these pathways will help practitioners enhance their T&D initiatives to facilitate employee retention, and will provide insight that will strengthen the business case for investing in training and development.

2.3. Mentorship

Mentoring is defined as the process through which one person, the mentor, agrees to help the career progression and the personal growth of another, the mentee. Mentors, therefore are positioned outside the conventional manager-subordinate framework (Kram, 1985; Clutterbuck, 2014). As such, a mentor is considered a more experienced professional, who cares about the career of the mentee in general and helps to achieve goals and realize potential by mentoring a protégé's development educationally, professionally, and psychosocially (Ragins & Kram, 2007).

Mentoring in an organization context can be seen as a form of fast-track HRD in which senior members develop promising young professionals seen as future leaders or crown princes (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2009). In this sense, it becomes a wholesome developmental tool meant to improve professional competence, behavior and leader ability of the emerging leaders.However, a mentee’s career progression and personal development will depend on the way mentoring is practiced in various organizations as the intent of mentoring can differ across firms depending on their goals and structuring of their mentoring program (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2010). In an organization, mentoring can be done informally between members of staff, arising naturally without formal arrangement or formally through a structured program, to attain the objectives for which it has been designed (Allen et al., 2004).

Whatever the format used for mentoring, it generally covers two essential dimensions: career development and psychosocial support (Kram, 1985). Some functions are combined. These include: offering sponsorship, guidance, and feedback within work roles to promote opportunities for advancement. Others include development through teaching on work skills, which are combined with functions like nurturing the mentee’s confidence, sense of belonging, and self-esteem through support, friendship, and acceptance (Eby et al., 2013; Ragins & Kram, 2007). The mentoring relationship, therefore, serves both personal and professional development purposes for the mentee. This enhances employee retention with improved commitment as well as career progression within the organization (Eby et al., 2013).

In SHRM, the use of mentoring as a developmental tool has increasingly been highlighted. This is because increased talent management has become key in sustaining human capital and has provided a rationale for individual development aimed at improved organizational performance (Clutterbuck, 2014; Garavan et al., 2021). Furthermore, the link between mentoring and employee retention has been well illustrated over the past few decades in HRD literature. This is mainly because retention of human capital preserves an organization's knowledge, reducing associated turnover costs (Swap et al., 2001).

A 2018 survey by the Aberdeen Group reported that about 61% of human resource executives declared their number one workforce challenge to be capturing and transferring the knowledge held by some staff members to others within the organization. Mentoring is one of the mechanisms used to achieve that transfer, hence capturing the tacit knowledge of mentors (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Other longitudinal studies have shown that there is a correlation between retention and the level of organizational commitment, and that mentoring relationships play an influential role (Eby et al., 2013; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2010). It is the personal ties within the mentoring relationship that cultivate the affective component in order to develop identification and loyalty towards the organization.

Hence, there are two pathways in which mentoring affects employee retention. The first is by creating and strengthening interpersonal relationships leading to greater commitment. The second is the effective transmission of knowledge. Integrating mentoring programs in human resource development plans contributes to the employee's ability and leadership effectiveness. This enhances employee retention and increases organizational effectiveness (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2014; Allen et al., 2004; Kram, 1985).

2.4. Coaching

Coaching is a process where one person facilitates the development and action planning of another, in order that the individual can bring about changes in their lives (Cole, 2015). Coaching is not advice giving and does not involve the coach sharing their experience or opinions (Armstrong, 2015). Performance coaching is determined by goal setting, feedback, personal development and goals achievement (Adams, 2015).

Coaching helps employees move forward at their pace within an equal and trusting relationship.

Coaching for executives or employees achieves a fulfilling balance between professional goals and personal development (Ahmad,2016). In a business context, Coaching can bring out the true potential of staff at all levels (Walker, 2016). According to Baker (2015) coaching plays a significant role towards helping managers in understanding how employees' thoughts and behaviors are affected by emotions, relationships and social networks. This helps in goal setting, feedback, personal development and goals achievement which leads to increased rate of employee retention (Ball,2015).

2.5. Career development opportunities

The role of career development opportunities on employee retention is primarily rooted in addressing job promotion, mentorship and education advancements as its key indicators. Noe et al (2015) suggest that career development is normally a discussion between the employee and his or her manager. Career development is defined by Fletcher and Leatherbarrow (2019) as a strategic process that aligns individual employee growth with organization goals. This literature places emphasis on structured learning and development, talent management and performance alignment.

Job promotions stand as an indicator for career development as it places employees on another level of employment. Through merit job promotions after appraisals, fairness is enhanced which relatively increases satisfaction levels from the job and employees would stay in the organization. Sem et al (2022) state that structured mentorship programs in academic health centers have been shown to improve promotions, success rates and retention by aligning career goals with institutional support. On the other hand, if promotion is arbitrary, or a select group is favored it can create dissatisfaction which then causes employees to leave (especially in hierarchical culture where transparency is not usually adequate). Furthermore, mentorship connects development gaps with individual career paths, thus also counteracts turn over issues.

There is a need for effective mentors who are characterized as approachable, trustworthy and skilled in fostering self-reflection which strengthen retention of employees as highlighted by Sem et al (2022).

Furthermore, Career development can also be seen through education investment such as training in transferable skills or further qualifications to enhance employee loyalty and marketability. Martins and Facciola (2025) say LinkedIn reports state that 94% of employees stay longer when companies invest in their development as education signals long term commitment from employers. However, Infrastructure gaps hinder access to upskilling programs as rural employees and Small and Medium Enterprises often lack resources for continuous education leading to employee turnover in Agricultural and Informal trade sectors.

2.6. Employee Retention

Employee retention is the effort by an employer to keep desirable workers in order to meet business objectives (Walker, 2007). As a process, retention refers to what organizations do to ensure that employees remain in the organization for the desired period of time. As an outcome, retention refers to the number of employees staying as envisioned by the organization in contrast to those leaving. Employee retention is a desire by employees to continue to do business or exchange with a particular organization on an ongoing basis (Gannon, 2015).

Employee retention also refers to the ability of an organization to retain its employees. Employee retention can be represented by a simple statistic. For example, a retention rate of 80% usually indicates that an organization kept 80% of its employees in a given period (Gannon, 2015). However, many consider employee retention as relating to the efforts by which employers attempt to retain the employees in their workforce. In this sense, retention becomes the strategy rather than the outcome (Armstrong, 2015).

According to Bersin (2016), retention is driven by several key factors, which ought to be managed congruently: organizational culture, strategy, pay and benefits philosophy and career development systems. According to Boxall and Purcell (2015) employee coaching plays a major role in making organizations realize increased rates of employee retention. Employee retention is determined by employee productivity, quality of work, employee engagement and satisfaction survey and employee commitment level.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative research design that involved measurement and numerical description of the subject under investigation using a survey structured questionnaire (Creswell, 2014). The study used this method since the study sought to measure statistically the link between staff development programmes and the level of retention of UCU staff and to be in a position to generalize the results to the whole population.

3.1. Research Design

This was a descriptive cross-sectional survey design using quantitative methodology. Descriptive design provided a systematic and factual account of the present state of affairs. It answers the question "what is" but not "why it is" (Kothari, 2004). It was a cross-sectional design because data was collected at a single point of time and described the prevailing situation regarding staff development and retention at UCU at that time.

3.2. Study population

The study population comprised the permanent and long-term employees of Uganda Christian University. This included both teaching staff (lecturers, senior lecturers, professors) and non-teaching staff (administrative and other support employees) that have continuous contracts with the university. The rationale behind this limitation was that the research addressed the staff retention issue and that this could only apply to those that have continued service for a long time. Temporary employees often serve for short periods and might not be subject to retention practices. Because of this, they may not be part of the long-term development programs (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

The population of the study consisted of about 788 permanent and long-term staff working at UCU Mukono Campus (as stated by the Human Resource office, Nov. 2005) in various departments and directorates, from which a sample was selected for this study.

3.3. Sampling

A statistical sample was determined to accommodate three major staff categories—academic, administrative, and support staff.

The total sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula at 7% precision:

$$n = N/(1 + N(e)^2)$$

Where: *n* = required sample size

N = population size

e = level of precision (0.07)

The population: 788 permanent staff:

$$n = ((788)/((1 + 788(0.07)^2)) = 788/4.86 = 162.0999 \simeq 162\ respondents$$

3.3.1. Sampling Considerations and Post-Screening

The questionnaires were distributed broadly among staff members at UCU with management approval. To maintain ethical neutrality, the questionnaire didn't pre-screen respondents based on contract type. Instead, a demographic section was captured, each respondent's type of employment contract (permanent, long-term renewable, part-time) and length of service at UCU.

3.4. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Responses from staff members with *permanent or renewable long-term contracts* who have worked at UCU for at least *one year* were considered for quantitative analysis.

However, responses from staff members on *part-time* contracts, as well as those with *less than one year* of service, were excluded.

The above criteria ensured that respondents had sufficient exposure to UCU's staff development initiatives and retention practices to provide reliable data (Hausknecht et al., 2009).

3.5. Data collection methods and data collection tools

The study relied primarily on primary data, collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire. This consisted of 27 close-ended statements designed to measure staff perceptions related to; Staff development strategies at UCU, Challenges to staff development, Staff retention and the effect of staff development on retention.

All items used a five-point Likert scale to ensure uniformity in data analysis. Self-administered questionnaires were cost-effective, ensured respondent anonymity, and allowed for standardized data collection across a large sample (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).162 Questionnaires were randomly distributed physically to reach staff members at the UCU Mukono campus across all departments and employment categories.

3.6. Content Validity

The questionnaire was checked for content validity by the research supervisor and senior lecturers at UCU to see if each item measured what it was supposed to measure and whether it is in line with research objectives. Questions that were vague or unnecessary were modified or removed.

3.7. Reliability

The internal consistency of questionnaire items was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a reliability coefficient (α) of 0.70 or above indicated acceptable internal consistency.

3.8. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Out of the 162 distributed questionnaires, 150 were retrieved, and 132 were completely filled indicating a 81% response rate which is considered adequate for analysis according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). These were checked for completeness, coded, and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21) for analysis. Out of these 14 completed questionnaires were excluded as the respondents were either part-time employees or had served for less than 1 year.

3.8.1. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were used to summarize responses for all sections of the questionnaire.

3.8.2. Inferential Analysis

Inferential statistics was employed to test the null hypotheses and determine relationships between respondents' perception on Staff Development strategies and Employee retention. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) measured the strength and d

direction of the relationship between staff development and staff retention. Linear regression analysis determined how much variation in retention could be explained by staff development initiatives.

A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used to determine statistical significance (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.8.3. Data Interpretation

Interpretation involved comparing descriptive and inferential results against the study objectives and theoretical expectations. Findings from analysis were correlated with theories and literature to allow for meaningful conclusions. The highest ranked staff development attributes were revealed through mean score comparisons, and regression coefficients helped quantify the relationship between predictor variables and the dependent variable. This method provides for empirically sound and theoretically relevant results (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee at Uganda Christian University before the commencement of the research. The respondents were requested to participate on voluntary basis and made aware of the aim of the research. A cover note attached to the questionnaire informed the respondents on the objective of the study and guaranteed their anonymity and confidentiality. No identifiers were collected on the respondents and the data collected was stored safely and used only for research purpose.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. DATA PRESENTATION, TREATMENT AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Results and Discussion

4.1.1. Demographics

The respondent's distribution among various characteristics such as gender, age, employment status, employment category and length of service was balanced (Table 1). Out of 117 respondents, 55.6% were men and 44.4% women, indicating a fairly representative sample in terms of gender. With regard to age, 39.3% of the respondents fell within the 30-39 age range, while 29.1% were 20-29 years old. Employees aged 40-49 were 15.4%, while 50+ years were 8.5%. Finally, the 18-24 age group was represented by 7.7%. The sample was dominated by administrative staff (52.1%), while 33.3% were academic staff and 14.5% were support staff. Most of the respondents (53.0%) had long-term renewable employment status while 30.8% were permanently employed. Temporary staff represented 16.2% of the sample. The sample had a fairly spread distribution among the length of service ranges of 1-3 years (35.0%), 4-6 years (31.6%) and more than six years (33.3%). The overall profile represents an experienced and maturing workforce that was well suited to responding on practices for staff development and retention.

Variable	**Category**	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**
Gender	Male/Female	65 / 52	55.6 / 44.4
Age	18–24, 20–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50+	9, 34, 46, 18, 10	7.7, 29.1, 39.3, 15.4, 8.5
Employment Category	Academic, Administrative, Support Staff	39, 61, 17	33.3, 52.1, 14.5
Nature of Employment	Permanent, Long-term Renewable, Temporary	36, 62, 19	30.8, 53.0, 16.2

Duration of Service	1–3 yrs, 4–6 yrs, Over 6 yrs	41, 37, 39	35.0, 31.6, 33.3

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

4.1.2. Descriptive Statistics

Overall, perceptions on development programs at UCU can be regarded as good, as shown by the Staff Development Strategies descriptive statistics (Table 2). This is a 7-item scale which exhibited a good internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.85 and seems to be reliable. The item means fall between 3.35 and 4.07 (on a five-point scale). The highest mean score was obtained on item SDS2 (M=4.07, SD=0.81) and the lowest score on item SDS4 (M=3.35, SD=1.11). This means that most people in the organization believed that Staff Development Programs in UCU are aligned with institutional aims and objectives, and only a few disagreed on that the mentorship program has been implemented for both old and new staff and also only a few agreed on that. Other items recorded means above 3.5 and show agreement on the implementation of development strategies and their effectiveness. The standard deviations indicate a considerable consistency in responses. Generally, it means that staff development strategy is in place and its reception in the organization is positive, although certain aspects could be strengthened.

Item	Statement of the Question	Mean	Std Dev	Cronbach's Alpha
SDS1	UCU provides regular training programs for staff improvement.	3.90	1.02	0.85
SDS2	Staff development programs at UCU are aligned with institutional goals.	4.07	0.81	0.85
SDS3	Coaching is actively used to enhance staff performance.	3.49	0.87	0.85

SDS4	Mentorship opportunities are available to both new and experienced staff.	3.35	1.11	0.85
SDS5	Career development planning is encouraged and supported by management.	3.77	0.90	0.85
SDS6	There are adequate financial and material resources for staff development.	3.37	1.06	0.85
SDS7	Supervisors support and participate in staff development initiatives.	3.74	0.89	0.85

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Staff Development Strategies

The challenges to staff development programs (CH) were also measured using a seven-item scale, with the test resulting in a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.83 (highly acceptable test-retest reliability as reflected in table 3). Mean responses on this scale were between 3.03 and 3.68, with CH1 having the highest mean (M=3.68, SD=1.00) and CH5 having the lowest (M=3.03, SD=1.08). A general trend from the means suggests moderate acceptance that there are challenges that can influence staff development programs in an institution. The rather high means point toward employee perceptions that resources, time constraints, or structural hindrances affect program implementation. These mean responses demonstrate that the implementation of development programs is affected by discernible constraints in the workplace.

Item	**Statement of the Question**	**Mean**	**Std Dev**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
CH1	Funding limitations hinder effective staff development.	3.68	1.00	0.83
CH2	Heavy workloads prevent staff from attending development programs.	3.52	1.10	0.83
CH3	There is limited awareness about available staff development opportunities.	3.26	1.00	0.83

CH4	Some departments lack a structured development policy.	3.31	1.10	0.83
CH5	Supervisory support for development initiatives is inconsistent.	3.03	1.08	0.83
CH6	There is insufficient follow-up to evaluate the impact of development activities.	3.06	1.10	0.83
CH7	Development opportunities are not distributed equitably across staff categories.	3.20	1.23	0.83

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for Challenges to staff development

Levels of retention (RT) were measured using 6 items which yielded acceptable reliability (coefficient = .76, as shown below in Table 4). It can be seen from this table that the means for retention ranged from 3.11 to 4.26. RT6 achieved the highest mean, M=4.26, S.D.=0.89, and so reflects high affirmation towards the institution as employees appear to be committed, or intend to stay in the institution, whilst RT4 had the lowest mean, M=3.11, S.D.=1.04. Generally, the means are above the middle point of the 5-point scale; implying a reasonably high tendency of retention on the part of employees and so the intention and commitment towards the institution is moderately high although specific components may need to be emphasized.

Item	**Statement of the Question**	**Mean**	**Std Dev**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
RT1	I am satisfied with my current job at UCU.	3.64	1.11	0.76
RT2	I intend to continue working at UCU in the foreseeable future.	3.82	0.92	0.76
RT3	UCU provides an attractive and stable work environment.	3.99	0.85	0.76
RT4	Staff turnover rates at UCU are generally low.	3.11	1.04	0.76

RT5	Opportunities for promotion and growth encourage retention.	3.66	1.10	0.76
RT6	Management recognizes and rewards staff commitment and performance.	4.26	0.89	0.76

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for Retention Levels

Items on staff development programs' effect on retention of employees (EFF) were assessed using seven items and resulted in a good measure of internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.83; Table 5). Mean scores for the seven items were varied from M = 3.38 to M = 3.97. The top item was EFF5 (M = 3.97, SD = 0.80), and the lowest item was EFF4 (M = 3.38, SD = 1.06). The general trend is that the participants agree with the fact that staff development programs have a positive effect on retention, and the relatively spread-out means imply consistent beliefs across the employees. This corroborates the premise that staff development programs contribute to the level of commitment and employees' intention to turnover.

Item	**Statement of the Question**	**Mean**	**Std Dev**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
EFF1	Staff development programs motivate employees to stay at UCU.	3.91	0.95	0.83
EFF2	Training and career advancement increase job satisfaction.	3.82	0.91	0.83
EFF3	Employees who receive regular development are more loyal to the institution.	3.70	0.98	0.83

EFF4	Coaching and mentorship reduce the likelihood of staff turnover.	3.38	1.06	0.83
EFF5	Development opportunities enhance employees' sense of belonging.	3.97	0.80	0.83
EFF6	The quality of staff development directly influences retention rates at UCU.	3.74	0.97	0.83
EFF7	Continuous professional growth is a key reason for staying at UCU.	3.65	1.09	0.83

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for Effects of Staff Development efforts on Staff Retention

4.1.3. Inferential Statistics

The strength and direction of the association between the development of staff and retention of employees was investigated using Pearson product moment correlation. The result is shown in Table 6.

Variables	**r**	**p-value**	**N**
SDP Score & Retention Score	0.427	0.000	117

Table 6: Pearson Correlation between Staff development efforts and Staff Retention

The study showed a moderate positive significant relationship (r=0.427, p=0.000) between staff development and retention. This suggests that enhanced staff development will promote increased employee retention. The magnitude of this relationship indicated that the importance of staff development in determining an employee's decision to stay with the organization is considerable.

To further find the predictive ability of staff development on retention, a simple linear regression was carried out. The details of the model results can be found in table 7 below:

Model	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	2.25	0.30	0.00	7.48	0.000
SDP score	0.41	0.08	0.43	5.07	0.000

Table 7 Linear Regression of staff Development on Retention

The model summary revealed R=0.43 and R=0.18, respectively; staff development accounted for 18% of the variance in employee retention. The result of the ANOVA was significant; F (1,115) =25.68, p=0.000. The staff development had a positive and significant regression coefficient (B=0.41, =0.43, t=5.07, p=0.000). The finding indicated that, for every 1-unit increase in staff development, there is a 0.41 increase in retention.

Thus, this evidence supports the research hypothesis, staff development has a significant positive relationship with the retention of employees in UCU Mukono Campus. Despite being modest, this result provided empirical support for the hypothesis.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary of the findings

The main objective of the study was to investigate the impact of staff development programs on employee retention at UCU Mukono Campus. Employee perceptions on staff development strategies, implementation challenges on staff development programs, level of retention, and impact of development programs on retention were analyzed from a sample of 117 employees. The data was analyzed using reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and linear regression analysis on SPSS.

The results indicated that employee perceptions on the implementation of staff development strategies are moderately implemented and positively perceived, though the organization still faces some of the implementation challenges. The retention level of the employees at UCU Mukono Campus was moderately high, and there was a great tendency for employees to report the positive influence of development programs on employee retention. Analysis of correlation and linear regression found a moderate positive correlation between staff development and retention ($r = 0.425$ and $p < 0.01$), while staff development programs explained 18% of the variance in employee retention.

5.2. Conclusions

This research found that staff development programs can make a positive impact on employee retention, as organizations that are committed to providing staff development, training, and improvement opportunities tend to retain more staff. However, the existence of some moderate factors indicates that the impact of the program might be restricted due to some structural and organizational constraints. Even though staff development is one of the determining factors, it is not the only factor, and this signifies that an integrated HR strategy on compensation, leadership, work environment, and career progression systems would be essential.

5.3. Recommendations

From these results, the UCU is advised to enhance planning, organization and execution of staff development initiatives through availability of sufficient funds, access and effective communication of opportunities to staff. The managerial and policy aspects that hamper effectiveness of participation in development activities can be managed and staff development policies can be integrated into retention programs that guarantee coherence with career path and goals, along with mechanisms for evaluation and monitoring the impact on retention.

5.4. Limitations and Areas for Further Research

This study was conducted in one institution, and it uses self-reported data that were gathered at one time. Longitudinal design would be beneficial in terms of investigating causal relationship more accurately. This study could be expanded to include several institutions in order to improve generalizability. In future research, mediators such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, leadership style could be investigated.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Questionnaire on the Effects of Staff Development Programs on Staff Retention

Dear Respondent,

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study titled “Staff Development Programs and Employee Retention: A Case Study at Uganda Christian University.” This study seeks to examine how staff development initiatives such as training, coaching, mentorship, and career development impact staff retention within the university.

Your participation is voluntary, and there are no risks involved. Please answer all questions honestly. All information will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

Section A: Respondent Demographic Information

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age bracket: ☐ 18–24 ☐ 20–29 ☐ 30–39 ☐ 40–49 ☐ 50 and above
3. Department/Faculty: ____________________________
4. Employment category: ☐ Academic ☐ Administrative ☐ Support Staff
5. Nature of employment:

☐ Permanent ☐ Long-term renewable ☐ Temporary ☐ Part-time

6. Duration of service at UCU:

☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1–3 years ☐ 4–6 years ☐ Over 6 years

Section B: Staff Development Strategies at UCU

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. UCU provides regular training programs for staff improvement.					
2. Staff development programs at UCU are aligned with institutional goals.					
3. Coaching is actively used to enhance staff performance.					
4. Mentorship opportunities are available to both new and experienced staff.					
5. Career development planning is encouraged and supported by management.					
6. There are adequate financial and material resources for staff development.					
7. Supervisors support and participate in staff development initiatives.					

Section C: Challenges to Staff Development at UCU

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. Funding limitations hinder effective staff development.					
9. Heavy workloads prevent staff from attending development programs.					
10. There is limited awareness about available staff development opportunities.					
11. Some departments lack a structured development policy.					
12. Supervisory support for development initiatives is inconsistent.					
13. There is insufficient follow-up to evaluate the impact of development activities.					
14. Development opportunities are not distributed equitably across staff categories.					

Section D: Staff Retention at UCU

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. I am satisfied with my current job at UCU.					
16. I intend to continue working at UCU in the foreseeable future.					
17. UCU provides an attractive and stable work environment.					
18. Staff turnover rates at UCU are generally low.					
19. Opportunities for promotion and growth encourage retention.					
20. Management recognizes and rewards staff commitment and performance.					

Section E: Effects of Staff Development on Retention

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. Staff development programs motivate employees to stay at UCU.					

22. Training and career advancement increase job satisfaction.					
23. Employees who receive regular development are more loyal to the institution.					
24. Coaching and mentorship reduce the likelihood of staff turnover.					
25. Development opportunities enhance employees' sense of belonging.					
26. The quality of staff development directly influences retention rates at UCU.					
27. Continuous professional growth is a key reason for staying at UCU.					

Thank you for your participation!