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## Organizational Politics as a Predictor of Teacher Turnover-Intentions in Secondary Schools in Tororo Municipality, Uganda

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Abstract: This study investigated the extent to which Organizational Politics (OP) influences teachers' turnover intentions in secondary schools in Tororo Municipality, Uganda. This research which was grounded on Vrooms' expectancy theory (1964) specifically assessed the influence of OP on teachers' turnover-intentions among secondary schools in Tororo Municipality. A cross-sectional survey design was used where both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were employed. In this study five (5) administrators were purposively sampled for the interview while 159 teachers were sampled using stratified sampling. A structured questionnaire was used for collecting data from the teachers while administrators were interviewed. Regression analysis was used for the study. The results indicated a low positive correlation between OP and turnover intentions (r = .299, p < 0.005). The study concluded that OP exists in schools moderately, also teachers have intentions to leave but have no alternative jobs. In addition, there was a low, positive, correlation between OP and teachers' turnover intentions in secondary schools in Tororo Municipality. The study recommended that administrators should be trained through workshops and seminars to make decisions through consensus to avoid promotion of self-interest and conflicts which lead to OP and also provide adequate remunerations to avoid turnover intentions.

Keywords: organizational politics, Turnover intentions, Staff groupings, Self-serving manner, Job search.

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## 1. Introduction

Organizational Politics is the action employees of an organization engage in to attain, advance, and use influence for achieving their own goals (Ahmad, et al., 2016). It also means an independent state in which employees of an organization observe themselves or others as deliberately looking for self-centered ends in an organizational setting when such ends are different from those of others. In the context of this study, organizational

politics consists of overall political actions where individuals act in a self-serving manner to obtain valued outcomes. Organizational politics may not necessarily be practiced by an individual, but it can be carried out as a group. Informal groups are often formed within the organization and different forms of alliances tend to breed among entities (Cacciatolo, 2014). Vigoda-Gadot and Drory (2006) contend that group politics may be stimulated or debilitated by organizational cultural principles, which may also mold the direction that group

politics will take. Groups may consist of either supervisors and assistants in a department, employees that belong to the same hierarchical level, or employees that fall into the same common circle. This study conceptualized organizational politics as staff groupings exhibited by the way teachers communicate and relate with each other; self-serving manner evidenced through characters like blaming others, pushing their agenda, self-promoting and criticizing others; Cohesiveness shown by open communication and mutual support.

On the other hand, teacher turnover intentions are defined by Chaubey, et al. (2013) as the intent of an individual to transfer membership from one organization to another. In addition, the turnover intention is the extent to which employees in an organization plan to leave their positions or whether that organization strategizes to eliminate employees from positions (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). Martinelli (2017) argues that causes of turnover intentions include: lack of promotion, overworking, failure to get feedback and acknowledgment, and not being involved in decision-making. However, Husain (2015) argues that job satisfaction, trustworthy relationships, job security, organizational commitment, and less job stress reduce turnover intention. In this study, the turnover intention is defined as a teacher's intent to leave the school willingly. This conduct may include the intention of searching for a different job and thinking about leaving. Therefore, the turnover intention is conceptualized as job search exhibited by continual networking through applying to various organizations for jobs, making phone calls to different organizations for jobs, and checking for jobs in newspapers and the internet; Absenteeism is shown by decreased productivity and poor quality work: Lack of commitment shown by withdrawal such as arriving late for work and leave early, poor concentration, inconsistent performance, complaining and resistance to change.

This study is based on Vrooms's (1964) expectancy theory. Expectancy theory embraces that people are inspired to conduct themselves in ways that yield favorite combinations of anticipated consequences. Usually, expectancy theory can be applied to forecast actions in any state in which a choice between many alternatives must be made. For example, it can be used to forecast leaving or staying on a job (Jingdong et al, 2017). Vroom (1964) asserts that the strength of inclination to behave in a particular way is hinged on the strength of expectancy that the act will be followed by a given result and, on the value, or attractiveness of that outcome to the actor. Therefore, teachers join schools with different interests, ambitions, and goals. In other words, they have different expectations, and once they are not fulfilled, they search for other jobs in other organizations. Connected to this theory, organizational politics can motivate teachers positively or negatively, affecting their expectations accordingly. Often, when teachers' expectations are threatened more, especially by organizational politics, turnover intentions are developed.

Emerson (2013) in the USA, found out that organizational politics led to job dissatisfaction hence it could have led to intentions to leave and vice versa. Therefore, whenever workers promote self-interest and neglect organizational goals, their cooperation reduces, and turnover intentions are likely to manifest. Perryer et al (2010) explained that turnover intention was a severe challenge in the organization in Australia; however, employees with more support from the organization had less possibility of leaving their jobs. In Pakistan, Ahmed (2018) elucidated that in organizations where there was a political atmosphere, such as injustice and unclear policies on pay and promotion, among others, turnover intentions were very high, implying that organizations that are politically charged are likely to have more turnover intentions.

In Africa, turnover intention is the major challenge that was explained by scholars like Attiah and AbouDahab (2017), Belete (2018), Ayalew (2015), and Masenya, Ngoepe, and Jiyane (2020), which can damage an organization resulting into, demoralizing workers and reduction in productivity, the exit of skilled and qualified staff and incurring direct and indirect expenses.

According to Ddungu (2014), Gyezaho (2014), and Tumwesigye (2010), turnover intention is still a major challenge in educational institutions. This is also observed in Omollo (2019), who indicated that several secondary school teachers in Tororo municipality had requested to be transferred to other stations of work due to organizational politics in their current stations of work. However, these transfers were reversed by their head teachers. Hence, they remain in school working but are disgruntled and harboring intentions to leave. It's upon this background that this study sought to determine the extent to which organizational politics could predict teachers' turnover intentions.

#### 1.1 Problem statement

According to Omollo (2019), secondary schools in Tororo Municipality have experienced turnover intentions where teachers request to be transferred, but the headteachers reverse the transfers. According to the education office statistical data in Tororo Municipality, there has been persistent turnover since 2019 (9%), 2021 (6.9%), and 2022 (10.3%). This could be attributed to organizational politics in the form of staff groupings, self-serving manner, and less cohesiveness, among others. Kyeyune (2018) reports that schools are characterized by organizational politics in the form of informal behaviors, unauthorized or backdoor energies used to sell ideas and

influence others, increased supremacy to push others to work, and many more. This has led to a loss of morale and commitment to work. Although various schools have undertaken measures to improve teachers' welfare and train teachers, teacher turnover intentions are increasing in Tororo Municipality (Omollo, 2019). Related to this, Ahmed (2018) indicated that organizational politics is a stimulus to turnover intentions, and may reduce employee productivity and efficiency hence employee lack of interest in work. Although some teachers fail to be transferred by the Ministry of Education and Sports, they remain discontented in the institution due to the status quo of the affairs. This could result in poor performance, as observed through absenteeism, job search, and lack of commitment, making schools not meet their objectives. It is upon this background that this study seeks to determine whether organizational politics has an influence on teachers' turnover intentions.

This study sought to determine the extent to which organizational politics influences teachers' turnover intentions in secondary schools in Tororo municipality.

The following null hypothesis was tested: -

Ho, Organizational politics does not significantly influence teachers' turnover intentions.

## 2. Literature Review

Ahmed's 2018 study in Pakistani private colleges examined organizational politics and turnover intentions, examining factors such as promotion and pay policies, favoritism, and resource scarcity. The results indicated that organizational politics make employees ineffective and inefficient, reducing workers' morale greatly and leading to high turnover intentions. It has been noted that aspirations for individual power, personal awards, promotion of one's self, and acting to achieve personal agenda like power recognition to get the attention of the boss and protect their jobs are the major antecedents of organizational politics. (Olorunleke, 2015; Issa and Abubakari, 2014). Olorunleke (2015) concluded that the promotion of self-interest due to the scarcity of resources creates a political atmosphere that increases turnover intentions in the organization. Lau, Scully and Lee (2018) seemed to agree with (Olorunleke, 2015), that, selfcenteredness makes people to act in a particular way to get recognition especially where resources are scarce.

However, De Clercq and Pereira (2021) have a different view, observing that organizational politics does not influence turnover intention a lot in organizations where there is information sharing, strong bonding in peer interactions, change climate, and understanding of climate. This is an atmosphere that has to be created by

the organizational leaders. They add that dysfunctional systems stimulate political games that arouse plans to quit. These plans can be avoided if employees are given support through frequent and informal communication with colleagues and the extent to which organizational leaders encourage transformation and exercise forgiveness. Another study (Allotey, 2019) among formal and informal groups in Ghana found that employees in informal groups reported the highest job satisfaction and lower organizational commitment than those who were in groups. prevalence of Apparently, the organizational politics is higher in formal organizations like educational institutions.

A study by Ali et al. (2021) revealed that Organizational Politics caused job stress, and this led to a decrease in workers' efficiency and an increase in job insecurity. Thus, this led to an increase in turnover intentions. Besides, Olufayo and Akinbo (2022) revealed that male and young employees had more turnover intentions in organizations with internal politics. They added that Organizational Politics had a significant and favorable association with income and career advancement. Hence, turnover intention for more educated and skilled employees was higher. The negative effect of organization politics is also Agina and Abdelhakim's (2021) study, which found that organizational politics in Egypt's hotels and travel companies led to decreased work quality and productivity, increased intentions to leave, and no significant correlation between compensation, advancement, and leave intentions. Even Namagulu's (2013) study on organizational politics and employee retention in Ugandan disabled people's organizations found that politics can influence turnover intentions, leading to increased turnover. The study suggests maintaining employee health and improving teamwork is crucial.

These studies about organizational politics did not align organizational politics with teachers' turnover intentions. Aspects such as effective leadership, job burnout, and staff retention were not assessed. For example, Issa and Abubakari (2014) focused on organizational politics and effective leadership, and Olorunleke (2015) focused on the effect of organizational politics on organizational goals and objectives.

Most studies reviewed, for example, Cacciatolo (2014), Atta and Khan (2016), and Olorunleke (2015), view organizational politics as having negative tactics such as going through improper channels to obtain favors, blame game, use of information to tarnish other peoples' image, and acting against the rules and procedures. Although a few studies like that of Lencioni (2006) have come up to discuss the positive side of organizational politics, much research is still needed that can bring out both the positive

and negative forms and how these influence teachers' turnover intention.

Most research were not carried out in education institutions; for example, Novatasari (2020) studied employees in the automotive industry, Sutanto and Kurniawan (2016) investigated the batik industry and others in hotel and hospitality. So, there was a need to study the extent to which turnover intentions manifest in the education context, especially in secondary schools. Therefore, this study was specific on how organizational politics can predict teachers' turnover intentions in secondary schools in the Tororo Municipality.

## 3. Methodology

## 3.1 Research design

A cross-sectional survey design was used in the study because the researcher intended to gather data from a large sample of the population from the same category of respondents but different secondary schools in Tororo Municipality at the particular time of inquiry (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed to help in a greater understanding of the topic and analysis of data from the study population as it enabled the attainment of quality and dispassionate information. Qualitative data was collected from head teachers using interview guides to solicit detailed views of the participants, and quantitative data was collected from teachers using structured closed-ended questionnaires to capture a more complete, holistic view of data and to achieve complete insight into the meaning of the results obtained (Amin, 2005).

## 3.2 Sampling and samples

The study population was drawn from 13 secondary schools in Tororo Municipality, and so it included 13 head teachers and 261 teachers who work in Tororo Municipality secondary schools (Municipal Education Officers report, 2019). The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. A total of 159 teachers were used for the quantitative study. Also, a total of 5 head teachers were selected from 13 head teachers basing on the status, schedule and ownership of the school to give key information for the qualitative study. The study used stratified random sampling to ensure that teachers from different categories of schools are adequately represented in the sample so as to increase their level of accuracy. Strata were categorized as boarding schools, day schools, private schools, government aided schools, mixed schools and single sex

schools. This was to achieve desired representation from all the various subgroups in the population. Furthermore, Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers because they were central to supervisory roles in the schools, besides, by their respective positions, they were the only individuals holding those positions and they were expected to have more information on organization politics and turnover intentions as supervisors. The study concluded with 5 headteachers because more participants gave the same information leading to repetition.

#### 3.3 Research tools

#### 3.3.1 Questionnaires

A structured questionnaire containing three sections was administered to the teachers. This was because teachers had the core information required for this study. The demographic section sought information on age, sex, religion, and type of school among others. A 10-item questionnaire on organizational politics was administered to the participants using Kacmar's (1997) three models measuring organizational politics as; staff groupings, selfserving manner, and cohesiveness. While Teacher turnover intentions were measured using a 10-item questionnaire adopted from Bothma and Roodt (2013) based on models such as job search, absenteeism, and commitment. The items were scored on a 5 Likert scale, 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (Not applicable), 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree). In addition, a structured open-ended questionnaire was administered to teachers to solicit qualitative views on factors that cause teachers' turnover intentions.

#### 3.3.2 Interview Guide

The interview guide was used and it comprised of the use of a set of programmed questions. The researcher posed a sequence of brief questions to the respondents. This was preferred for the reason that more information was obtained in more depth from the head teachers as they reported exhaustively. Interviews were flexible since the researcher was able to probe for more specific answers thus it was a reliable method for data collection. The researcher presented questions to the headteachers and their views were recorded on a mobile phone. Data obtained during the interview supplemented the data from the questionnaires.

# 3.4 Quality control of data collection instruments

The content validity of the items in the questionnaire intended to collect quantitative data was tested by availing them to two research supervisors who checked whether the items on the questionnaire conformed to the objectives of the study. The items that were considered relevant were identified and the content validity index (CVI) was calculated using the formula;

#### CVI = No. of questions considered relevant

#### Total No. of questions

The CVI = Number of relevant items (18) a Total number of items (20) was calculated to establish the CVI and it was .80 which was greater than .78. This was according to Lynn's (1986) criteria where any CVI greater than .78 was considered excellent, and items are passed as relevant if they were tested by two experts minimum and were all in perfect agreement (Polit, et al., 2007). The research supervisor also verified the open-ended part of the questionnaire and interview guide for the qualitative study to attest whether it conformed to the research objectives.

The reliability of the teachers' questionnaire was verified by piloting the questionnaire in two schools, thirty teachers were used and these did not contribute to the final study. Cronbach's alpha and the overall value were obtained  $\alpha=76$  for a reliable instrument which is above the recommended .70 (Amin, 2005) for a reliable instrument. The values of Cronbach  $\alpha$  for the scales were .74 and .76 for organizational politics and Turnover intentions respectively. These values meant that the scales used were consistent.

## 3.5 Data Collection procedures

An introductory letter was secured from Busitema University. Also, written permission was sought from the head teachers in schools. Finally, verbal appointments through phone calls with head teachers in the various schools for interviews were secured. An introductory letter was received from the Dean Faculty of Education, Busitema University, and was used to introduce the researcher to Tororo Municipality secondary schools to allow her to access the head teachers and teachers who were to participate in the study as respondents. In each

case, the introduction included explaining to the respondents the purpose of the study. This was intended to get their informed consent. Thereafter, an appointment was made with them to participate in the study. Interviews were conducted with each head teacher and questionnaires were administered to teachers. All interview responses were recorded using the researcher's mobile phone after alerting each respondent about it and getting their consent. Also, the researcher was writing down key points in a notebook to supplement the recording. The process of data collection took one month because of the busy schedule of headteachers who could not be got easily. The researcher had to meet them at their convenient time.

## 3.6 Data Analysis

To determine the influence of organizational politics on teacher turnover intentions, Regression analysis was used (González-Rodríguez, et al., 2012). Regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which organizational politics influences teachers' turnover intentions. The null hypothesis, which stated that: "organizational politics does not influence teachers' turnover intentions." was tested using Pearson product-moment correlation. Also, information from interviews was recorded, and verbatim statements about organizational politics and teacher turnover intentions were triangulated with quantitative data. These views were used to understand how organizational politics and teachers' turnover intentions manifest.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The influence of organizational politics on teachers' turnover intentions in secondary schools in Tororo municipality.

To establish the influence of organizational politics on teachers' turnover intentions in secondary schools in Tororo municipality, results were analyzed using the Pearson product moment correlation as indicated below:

Table 11: Pearson Product moment correlation between OP and turnover intentions

Correlations

		ORGPOL		TI	
	Pearson Correlation	1	.299**		
ORGPOL	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000		
	N	159	159		
	Pearson Correlation	.299**	1		
TI	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	159	159		
**. Correlation	is significant at the 0.01 level (2	2- tailed).			

#### **ORGPOL= Organizational Politics**

TI= turnover Intentions Source: Field data (2022)

A null hypothesis was tested, which stated that: "organizational politics does not influence teachers' turnover intentions." This was rejected, and the results indicated that there was a low positive correlation between organizational politics and turnover intentions (r = .299, p < 0.005). This implies that as the level of

organizational politics increases, the level of turnover intentions also increases.

Further Analysis was done to determine the influence of organizational politics and turnover intentions in secondary schools in Tororo municipality. In doing this, a simple linear regression analysis was done, and the results are summarized in Tables 2, 3, and 4 below.

Table 2: Summary of the simple linear regression between OP and Turnover intentions

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error in the Estimate
1	.299a	.089	.084	4.94955

a. Predictors: (Constant), ORGPOL = organizational politics

Source: Field data (2022)

The results in Table 5 reveal that turnover intention is predicted by organizational politics at (R-square = .089), which implies that there is an 8.4% dependence on organizational politics for turnover intention. This is low

dependence and not significant, which implies, therefore, that there could be other factors accounting for 91% that influence turnover intention other than organization politics.

Table 3: ANOVA of the simple Linear Regression of OP and turnover intentions

#### **ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
	Regression	377.293	1	377.293	15.401	.000b	
1	Residual	3846.192	157	24.498			
	Total	4223.484	158				

a. Dependent Variable: TOI= Turnover Intentions

b. Predictors: (Constant), ORGPOL= Organizational Politics

Source: Field data (2022)

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression Coefficient of OP and turnover Intentions

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		В	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.845	1.896		10.993	.000
1	ORGPOL	.227	.058	.299	3.924	.000

a. Dependent Variable: TOI

A simple linear regression of the effect of organization politics on turnover intentions gave a significant model (F= 15.401, p<0.005). Table 7 shows the regression model (equation), which indicates that for every unit

increase in organization politics, there was a 0.227 unit increase in the level of teacher turnover intention ( $\beta$ =.299, p<0.005). This implies that as the level of organizational politics increases, the level of turnover intentions also

increases. The results reject the null hypothesis which was stating that Organizational politics does not significantly influence teachers' turnover intentions. Therefore, we take the alternative.

Interviewee 1 (5<sup>th</sup> September 2022) concurs with these results that increase in organization politics leads to increase in turnover intentions and says;

Teachers who promote their interests draw the attention of the administration to their side all the time. They advocate for the resources of their department at the expense of others, and this makes their colleagues feel less recognized; hence, they can think of looking for other places where they could be recognized. Besides, it splits staff, demotivates, and reduces the potential of those not catered for. As a result, they can think of going to places where they can fully maximize their potential.

This implies that teachers who carry out organizational politics to promote their interests make others lose interest in the organization and turnover intentions increase.

Interviewee 2. (9th September 2022) said "In my school, we have teachers' groupings according to the terms of employment. Teachers employed on a part-time basis mainly associated among themselves and those employed on full-time basis also associate within themselves." This denotes that teachers who are on a full-time basis probably have more time to share what is happening in school among themselves than those on a part-time basis. Hence those on full time basis participate more in organization politics and have more staff groupings.

That is why Interviewee 3 (10<sup>th</sup> September 2022) confirms, "Staff grouping discourages teachers who are not part of it from staying in school for long. They feel uncomfortable, isolated, and insecure; hence, they may think of looking for a better school where they work as a team."

Implying that schools, where teachers have staff groupings, are likely to experience higher turnover intentions because those isolated will feel uncomfortable with the environment and look for other places.

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study investigated how organizational politics influences teachers' turnover intentions in secondary schools. The results indicated a low positive correlation (r

= 0.299) between organizational politics and turnover intentions. This implies that turnover intentions increase as the level of organizational politics increases. This aligns with De Clercq and Pereira (2021), who opined that organizational politics influences turnover intentions moderately in organizations with knowledge sharing, relationship informality in peer exchanges, and a forgiveness climate. Our study, therefore, supports the findings of Ahmed's (2018) study about organizational politics and turnover intention in Pakistan, in which he concluded that activities of organizational politics make employees become ineffective and inefficient, reduce workers' morale significantly, and hence increase turnover intentions. Further, the above results concur with Olorunleke (2015), who concluded that promoting selfinterest due to scarcity of resources creates a political atmosphere that increases turnover intentions in organizations. These findings are similarly predictable by Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation (1964), which is based on the belief that individuals have choices and make decisions based on which they think will yield the best results. According to these results, activities of organizational politics appeared to influence employees to choose whether to continue serving or to look across the fence.

We therefore concluded that teachers in schools with vivid evidence of organizational politics harbor turnover intentions. Such teachers are unproductive in schools because they are nursing a feeling of departure.

#### 5.2 Recommendation

It is recommended that the school administrators minimize the manifestations of organization politics in their schools. Let school administrators promote the rule of law, open discussions, and practice an open-door policy that promotes stakeholder inclusivity. It may also be necessary to conduct education sector-wide study on organizational politics and its effect on teacher turnover intentions among teachers which could lead to a national policy-specific evident

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