

The Nexus between Emotional Intelligence and Turnover Intention among In-Service Teachers in Lira City and Wakiso District, Uganda

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the nexus between emotional intelligence and turnover intention among in-service teachers specifically in Lira City and Wakiso District, Uganda. The study was guided by the Person–Environment Fit Theory. A quantitative research approach and a cross sectional research design was adopted to conducted this study. The target population consisted of full time primary school teachers from both Government and Private schools. We sampled 38 schools (both government and private schools) using Stratified and Simple Random Sampling Techniques. In these schools 500 teachers were sampled using Simple Random Sampling technique. Data was collected using Self-Administered Standardized Questionnaires and analyzed using Stata 18. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Correlation Coefficient(r). Most teachers demonstrated strong emotional intelligence (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.92) and a moderate level of turnover intention (mean = 3.10, SD = 1.46). A reflection of mix feelings of opinions on job satisfaction, retention and future plans was realized. Further results revealed a significant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and turnover intention ($r = -0.19, p < 0.05$). There was no significant difference in level of turnover intention between teachers from Lira and Wakiso district ($t=1.41, p > .05$) and the model explained only 3.50% of the variance in turnover intention. In conclusion, the study results demonstrate a significant negative relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intention, indicating that emotional intelligence has the potency to trigger turnover intention. We therefore strongly recommend the need to; provide teachers with training courses on emotional intelligence, apply Emotional Intelligence Assessment when hiring and selecting employees, match employees to their suitable roles, offer Emotional Intelligence training for managers or school administrators, and encourage Psychological Safety at workplace.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, In-service Teachers, Turnover, Turnover Intention

I. INTRODUCTION

The proclivity of leaving a job or organization for another (Belete, 2018) by employees is one of the most financially burdensome and ostensibly insurmountable human resource dilemmas encountered by numerous educational institutions and organizations worldwide (Namusoke et al., 2017; Walid et al., 2021). In the United States of America, Qin (2019) undertook an investigation into the determinants influencing educators' proclivity to switch schools. Even though this study didn't focus at emotional intelligence as one of the predictors, results show that turnover intention remains a persistent and formidable issue within the educational sector, driven by a combination of pecuniary and non-pecuniary factors. In Africa, a study conducted by Ngo-Henha et al. (2022) among expatriate academics in South African higher education institutions revealed that employees exhibit a pronounced propensity to resign when their anticipations are unmet. This highlights the escalating challenge of retaining proficient staff, which has become a critical issue for numerous educational institutions.

In East Africa, Kamau et al. (2021), in their study on "Teachers' Turnover Intentions: The Role of Human Resource Management (HRM) Practices in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya," observed that despite the organization's concerted efforts to mitigate turnover, they are confronted with the persistent challenge of employees' turnover intentions. If left unresolved, these intentions could culminate in actual turnover. Given the dearth of skilled academics within educational institutions, this issue could have a profoundly detrimental impact on the education systems of numerous countries.

Even though some researchers believe that job turnover brings peace of mind to employees (Rahman, 2020) and is a riddance practice that might be healthy for any organization or institution, with the assumption that new ideas and healthy innovations can be realized in case a newly inaugurated employee or replacement is more functional (Kyeyune, 2018; Ngatuni & Matoka, 2020; Ramalho et al., 2018), employee turnover and having the intention of leaving have a devastating effect on organizations/educational institutions. A myriad of research has been conducted to examine the context-based determinants of turnover intention, however, most studies have focused on environmental conditions and not personal conditions like emotional intelligence, yet the latter could equally be more detrimental in triggering turnover intention and actual turnover among employees.

Numerous studies have quoted a significant relationship between emotional intelligence (Gara et al., 2021; Nanda & Randhawa, 2019; Shukla & Srivastava, 2016) and turnover intention, as well as unpatriotic organizational behaviors, though findings look antithetical. Whereas some studies have shown that high emotional intelligence reduces turnover intention as a result of an individual's ability to withstand occupational-related stress (Giao et al., 2020; Kabunga & Murithi, 2016; Rae & Yu, 2018), results of the correlation between emotional intelligence and turnover intention reported in other studies show that there is a negative (Kanyoru & Wabala, 2021; Khairuddin & Hussain, 2021; Rono & Kiptum, 2017), positive (Zahedi, 2015), and no correlation between these constructs (Choerudin, 2016; Brewster, 2020). These inconsistencies laid a foundation for this study. Besides, in Uganda, most researchers explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance and not turnover intention (e.g., Noel & Mosoti, 2016; Osunsan et al., 2020; Ssemwanga et al., 2021). Therefore, a close examination of the relationship between emotional intelligence will help in understanding the relationship between these variables and possibly streamline the antinomy in the previous literature with regards to the perspective of this study.

Apparently, scholarly work on the roles of emotional intelligence as determinants of turnover intentions within educational institutions has gained concern; however, findings from the available literature seem to gainsay one another. Considering the fact that research to date has failed to meticulously explain and resolve turnover, this study therefore aims at exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher turnover intention among primary school teachers in Lira City and Wakiso District, Uganda

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite Ugandan government's initiatives to enhance the welfare of teachers, the nation's education system especially at primary level remains perilous, as the tendency for skilled, talented, and dependable teachers to abandon the profession continues to escalate. Turnover rate and turnover intention within this esteemed profession is a big challenge, and the future prospects of this profession remains a threat (Azabo et al., 2023). The education sector loses thousands of dedicated professional teachers annually (Sol et al., 2022). Research has been conducted to examine the determinants of turnover intention however, most studies have focused on environmental conditions other than personal factors.

With a gap in research as in this context, it is not clear if this sentiment and behaviour is attributed to personal or environmental conditions. Besides, results from the previous studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intention appear contradictory and continue to be elusive. (Ahmad et al., 2018; Akhtar et al., 2017; Brewster, 2020; Choerudin, 2016; Giao et al., 2020). In the context of Uganda, the majority of scholarly investigations have predominantly concentrated on actual turnover (Bakangisa, 2019; Jingdong et al., 2017; Kyaligonza & Kamagara, 2017), rather than turnover intention yet the latter offers a more promising foundation and opportunity to devise and execute preventive intervention strategies before actual turnover betides. In Lira City and Wakiso district, Uganda, a significant number of educational institutions have transient staff and teachers face myriad of challenges. If their concerns are not addressed, then sustaining proficient teachers may remain a formidable challenge. The education sector may lose a number of talented teachers, and the quality of education, overall work productivity might be compromised.

1.2 Research Objective

This study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the level of emotional intelligence and turnover intention among in-service teachers.
2. To examine the nexus between emotional intelligence and turnover intention among in-service teachers.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intention

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Person–Environment Fit Theory

This study was guided by Person–Environment Fit theory. According to this theory, individuals have an inherent desire to align with their surroundings and actively seek environments that correspond to their personal traits and qualities (Falahat et al., 2014). This suggests that when teachers' personal traits, such as emotional intelligence, align with their work environment, their intention to leave or actual job turnover may not occur. However, if they experience job dissatisfaction, face significant work-related stress, and perceive a disconnect between their personal qualities and the job's demands, the desire to leave and dissatisfaction with the environment or job may become more evident.

2.2 Empirical Review

A profusion of definitions from a multitude of researchers and scholars has been put forward to explain the concept of emotional intelligence. Ssemwanga et al. (2021) define emotional intelligence as the ability of an individual to appreciate and control emotions and navigate situations in a way that enhances interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically. Brewster (2020) defines emotional intelligence as the level of optimism, social skill, and the ability to regulate and use emotions effectively. Serrat (2017) asserts that emotional intelligence reflects an aggregate “ability, capacity, skill, or of an individual to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of oneself, others, and groups p. 330. The four fundamental components or attributes that constitute emotional intelligence are self-regulation, social perception, self-awareness, and interpersonal management (Raghubir, 2018; Seyyed, 2017).

Employees' capacity to recognize, harness, interpret, categorize, and manage the emotions of themselves and others (Hubscher-Davidson, 2019) is a vital personal quality that serves as a conduit meant to help employees think clearly and remain focused (Kanyoru & Wabala, 2021), maintain good relationships among themselves, feel satisfied with the job, commit to work demands, be optimistic, tolerate one another (Kumkaria et al., 2017), develop emotional self-awareness and resilience, improve their job performance (Alwali & Alwali, 2022; Riego, 2020), succeed personally in life (Kasekende et al., 2020), deal with different categories of people within the community (Waiswa et al., 2020), and actively engage or concentrate on work (Zhu et al., 2021). It may also strengthen a person's ability to withstand challenges at workplace and may harness turnover intention.

Turnover intentions refer to the desire or interest an employee /a teacher has to leave his or her current job in a voluntary manner (Salama et al., 2022). “Turnover intention is a conscious willfulness of an individual to leave an organization within a predictable future” (Mir et al., 2021 p. 295). Similarly, Lazzari et al. (2022) look at turnover intention as an employee's interest to quit the current job and separate from the organization. Certain scholars argue that turnover intention serves as a precursor to actual employee attrition or turnover (Bhat, 2014). This is really worrying because when an employee voluntarily leaves, the school or organisation has to bear many costs, both hidden and apparent that eventually affects the organisation or institutional performance. Therefore, suppressing the development of turnover intentions that cause actual turnover among teachers is the centre of focus for most schools, organizations or companies.

The influence of emotional intelligence gained unprecedented attention and became a significant area of concern among scholars and researchers after the first publication on this discipline in 1990 (Akhtar et al., 2017; Asthana & Lodhwal, 2017). Although emotional intelligence has been reported in several studies as a variable that can help institutions and organizations reduce turnover intentions and actual job turnover (Falahat et al., 2014), findings from different researchers are not congruent with one another. In Uganda, Ssemwanga et al. (2021) conducted a study in private universities within the Kampala metropolitan area “to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of part-time lecturers”. Results of this study indicated that an enhancement in emotional intelligence and the level of emotional intelligence among employees contribute to a corresponding improvement in job performance. The study concluded that a high level of emotional intelligence significantly influences employees' job performance. Similar findings were also reflected in a study conducted by Noel and Mosoti (2016) when they examined “the influence of emotional intelligence on the performance of employees at Kinyara Sugar Works”. Despite such useful results, none of the above studies examined whether high emotional intelligence and outstanding performance minimize turnover intentions; hence, the relationship between the two variables remains narrowly understood in this context.

On the whole, a multitude of scholars have identified a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and turnover intention (Ahmad et al., 2018; Akhtar et al., 2017; Gao et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the majority of these investigations were carried out in disparate sectors and among different professional cohorts, leaving a substantial gap in understanding the dynamics between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions specifically within the context of primary school educators, particularly in northern Uganda. Khairuddin and Hussain (2021) examined the impact of leaders' emotional intelligence on turnover intentions and organizational commitment within the nursing sector in Pakistan. Their results indicated that emotional intelligence had a positive correlation with employees' work

commitment and a negative association with turnover intention. In essence, elevated levels of emotional intelligence were found to enhance employees' commitment to their work while concurrently diminishing their propensity to seek alternative employment or institutions. Despite these valuable findings, this study analyzed only the emotional intelligence of institutional leaders, not that of other employees. This leaves a flaw in the literature that needs to be addressed.

Leaders with high emotional intelligence have a strong personal efficacy, enabling them to face challenges or uncertainties with confidence (Chong et al., 2020). Conversely, low emotional intelligence and laxity in leaders often demoralize employees (Rono & Kiptum, 2017). This may be due to their inability to handle work-related challenges with objectivity and controlled emotions, which can eventually trigger turnover intention or actual job turnover among other workers (Gara et al., 2021). Most careers require employees to have the ability and capacity to control negative emotions (Matheri et al., 2018). This helps prevent unnecessary friction between employees within organizations or institutions. In a related study conducted by Kanyoru and Wabala (2021) on the “influence of emotional intelligence on turnover intentions among employees working in telecommunication firms in Kenya”, a negative and significant correlation was observed between turnover intentions and all aspects of emotional intelligence. These dimensions encompassed self-awareness, self-regulation, social perception, and interpersonal relationship management. Further findings showed that the ability to control impulsive and distressing emotions enables employees to withstand work-related challenges and reduce turnover intentions. The variables measured in this study predicted 60.3% of variations in turnover intentions. This signifies the power of emotional intelligence in relation to work.

The overall effect of low emotional intelligence can be more devastating (Akhtar et al., 2017). Sometimes, the decisions employees (teachers) make are influenced by the level of emotional intelligence they possess (Alkozei et al., 2016). Employees (teachers) with low emotional intelligence hardly control their feelings (Cuéllar-Molina et al., 2019), leading them to jump to wrong conclusions without thoroughly investigating the phenomenon, situation, or challenge at hand. This reduces their chances of making rational decisions, unlike those with high emotional intelligence. Hosain (2018) noted that an employee's intention to leave a job or an organization can be magnified or suppressed depending on their level of emotional intelligence. The higher the level of emotional intelligence, the lesser the turnover intention, while the lower the emotional intelligence, the greater the turnover intention. There are a multitude of challenges within organizations or institutions; however, turnover intention and actual turnover may not be the first option among employees with high emotional intelligence (Salama et al., 2022). This is due to their ability to endure challenges, understand the emotions of others, and perfectly control negative feelings. Although the aforementioned findings appear robust and credible, it remains uncertain whether the impact of emotional intelligence on turnover intention sustains its strength in contexts where an employee perceives no potential for achieving established objectives within an organization.

In a study conducted by Suwandana (2024), dread and turnover intentions were negatively and significantly correlated with emotional intelligence. This means that as employees' level of emotional intelligence decreases, their intention to leave their current job or organization increases. Similarly, Yaseen (2020) found that frustration and the intention to leave reduce as long as an employee can handle emotions and deal with different situations effectively. Employees who lack emotional control often face challenges at the workplace, and their intention to leave is usually high (Mehboob, 2016). Emotional intelligence enables employees to collaborate effectively with colleagues in pursuit of shared objectives. While numerous scholars have investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on turnover intention (Akhtar et al., 2017; Mehboob, 2016), findings indicate that emotional intelligence serves as a crucial determinant in forecasting both employees' turnover intentions and actual turnover (Hosain, 2018; Riaz et al., 2018). Nevertheless, limited research has been undertaken within the context of primary school educators to explore the nexus between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions, thereby rendering generalizations derived from studies involving other professional groups unrealistic.

On the contrary, Zahedi (2015) examined the association between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions among personnel in the Guilan Education Department, Guilan Province. The results of this study revealed a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions, suggesting that as an individual's emotional intelligence level rises, so does their propensity to depart from the organization. In another empirical study conducted by Choerudin (2016) on how job performance and turnover intentions are affected by emotional intelligence, no significant relationship was established between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions, though its influence on job performance was positive and significant. This shows that emotional intelligence does not influence turnover intentions. Similarly, Brewster (2020) analyzed the link between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions among employees within nonprofit organizations in the United States. The findings indicated no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions. These discrepancies underscore the need for additional inquiry to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions.

In Uganda, the majority of scholars have focused on examining the nexus between emotional intelligence and employee performance, rather than its association with turnover intentions (Noel & Mosoti, 2016; Ssemwanga et al., 2021). Besides, most studies, both domestically and globally, have primarily focused on employees within sectors outside of the education domain (e.g., Akhtar et al., 2017; Kanyoru & Wabala, 2021; Mehboob, 2016). The few studies conducted in the education sector do not address employees working in the primary education sector (Zahedi, 2015). Besides, while some researchers have reported a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions (e.g., Akhtar et al., 2017; Gao et al., 2020), others found a positive correlation between these variables (Zahedi, 2015), while some found no connection (Choerudin, 2016; Brewster, 2019). These conflicting findings require further examination.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

We used quantitative research approach and a correlational research design to examine the nexus between emotional intelligence and turnover intention among in-service teachers. This research design was appropriate as it enabled the researchers to relate the connection between independent and dependent variables.

3.2 Population

The target population consisted of full time primary school teachers from both government and private schools within Lira City and Wakiso district. Although turnover intention may as well be experienced by all teachers irrespective of their tenure system, most part time employees are not so much restrained by institutional terms and conditions of service. Additionally, the benefits they reap for their services may only eke out their regular income unlike some full-time teachers.

3.3 Sample Size

We used Slovin's formula to determine the minimum sample size. To cater for errors that may emerge during data collection, generate projections that more accurately reflect the population parameters and to get more precise results, a larger sample is preferred for quantitative data. Therefore, more samples were incorporated in this study and data was collected from 500 teachers.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

Schools were selected by use of Stratified Sampling Technique and Simple Random Sampling Technique. As a measure of ensuring fairness, schools were divided into strata depending on the common attributes they share. These include government and private schools. A representative sample that is proportional to the population under study was selected from each stratum using Simple Random Sampling Technique. Specific respondents (teachers) were selected using Simple Random Sampling technique. We specifically used lottery methods to identify these respondents.

3.5 Instruments and Measures

Data collection was done by use of Self-administered questionnaire which measures Emotional Intelligence and Turnover Intention with known psychometric properties. Emotional Intelligence scale, which consists of 16 items was adopted to measure teachers' level of Emotional Intelligence. This scale is made up of four domains that is, "Self-Emotion Appraisal (SEA), Others' Emotion Appraisal (OEA), Use of Emotion, and Regulation of Emotion (ROE)". The internal reliability of the four facets ranges from .76 to .89 and it's measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= totally disagree to 5 = totally agree.

In this study, we used a shortened version of Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) adapted by Roodt (2004) from his original version with a reported reliability of 0.80 (Bothma, & Roodt, 2013). This scale measures turnover intention more reliably and has a sound criterion-predictive, differential and factorial validity (Bothma & Roodt 2013). It's measured on a 5-point Likert-sale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.6 Quality Control Measures

To ensure validity of the research instruments, the researcher sought opinion on content and construct validity from experts. Copies of these questionnaires were presented to the other experts to; find out whether the instruments measure what they are meant for, check on the phrasing and wording so that ambiguity is avoided and misinterpretation of the questions by the respondents minimized. Content Validity Index (CVI) was used to establish whether the questionnaires measure what they purport to do. The raters' findings were used to calculate Content Validity Index (CVI).

The reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Test. These tools were pre-tested in selected schools among 38 teachers who were not part of the study. This was 10% of the minimum sample size as recommended

for piloting. A score of 0.70 and above was adopted as the hallmark of reliability and the reliability of .80, and .71 was realized for Emotional Intelligence and Turnover intention respectively. This therefore implies these instruments were reliable since all the major subsections had Alpha (α) values above 0.70.

To prevent the double responses, respondents were informed early enough not to be part of the study in case they have already participated before.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using Stata 18, a computerized system for analyzing data. Mean and standard deviation was computed for continuous variables. An independent sample t-test was conducted to examine the differences in the level of turnover intention between teachers from Lira city and Wakiso district. The relationship emotional intelligence and turnover intention was examined using Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r).

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Emotional Intelligence of Teachers

Respondents were asked to rate themselves along a given scale and their scores were as presented in table 1 that follows: Key: 5=Totally Agree (TA), 4=Agree (A), 3=Not Sure (NS), 2=Disagree (D), 1=Totally Disagree (TD), \bar{x} = mean, σ = Standard Deviation

Table 1

Emotional Intelligence of Teachers

Items by Dimensions	SA		A		NS		D		SD		\bar{x}	σ
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Self- Emotions Appraisal												
I have a good sense of why I feel certain feelings most of the time.	85	17.0	276	55.3	96	19.3	30	6.0	12	2.4	3.79	0.88
I have a good understanding of my own emotions.	188	37.6	243	48.6	36	7.2	26	5.2	7	1.4	4.16	0.87
I really understand what I feel.	175	35.1	257	51.5	33	6.6	20	4.0	14	2.8	4.12	0.90
I always know whether I am happy or not.	274	54.8	181	36.2	23	4.6	14	2.8	8	1.6	4.40	0.83
Sub-total											4.12	0.87
Regulation of Emotions												
I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior.	100	20.0	266	53.2	78	15.6	34	6.8	22	4.4	3.78	0.99
I am a good observer of others' emotions.	90	18.0	270	54.1	77	15.5	48	9.6	14	2.8	3.75	0.95
I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.	116	23.2	258	51.6	76	15.2	37	7.4	13	2.6	3.85	0.95
I have a good understanding of the emotions of people around me.	109	21.8	262	52.4	76	15.2	41	8.2	12	2.4	3.83	0.94
Sub-total											3.80	0.95
Use of Emotions												
I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them.	203	40.6	244	48.8	21	4.2	21	4.2	11	2.2	4.21	0.88
I always tell myself I am a competent person.	241	48.2	204	40.8	25	5.0	21	4.2	9	1.8	4.29	0.88
I am a self-motivating person.	245	49.0	203	40.6	24	4.8	22	4.4	6	1.2	4.32	0.85
I always encourage myself to try my best.	272	54.4	192	38.4	12	2.4	12	2.4	12	2.4	4.40	0.85
Sub- Total											4.31	0.87
Others-Emotions Appraisal												
I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally.	151	30.2	267	53.4	35	7.0	34	6.8	13	2.6	4.02	0.94
I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions.	141	28.3	279	55.9	35	7.0	34	6.8	10	2.0	4.02	0.90
I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry.	117	23.5	241	48.4	57	11.5	64	12.8	19	3.8	3.75	1.07
I have good control of my emotions.	139	27.9	251	50.3	51	10.2	44	8.8	14	2.8	3.92	0.99
Sub- Total											3.93	0.98
Grand mean											4.04	0.92

Table 1 provides an in-depth look at teachers' emotional intelligence across different dimensions. While some variability indicates areas for greater self-reflection, the overall confidence in teachers' abilities to comprehend their own emotional states is reflected in the Self-Emotions Appraisal, with a mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.87). The majority

of these teachers were in agreement with the items in this part, as seen by the minimum mean score of 3.79 and highest mean score of 4.40 for the items in this section. The highest scores in Self-Emotions Appraisal, emerged particularly from the statement, "I always know whether I am happy or not," with a mean of 4.40 (SD = 0.83). This indicates that teachers had a strong self-awareness of their emotions.

In Regulation of Emotions, teachers reported slightly lower scores, with a mean score of 3.78 (SD = 0.99) for the statement "I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior." The sub-total of 3.80 (SD = 0.97) shows moderate ability in this area, and underscores teachers' effective empathy and understanding of others' emotions which could be a key area for development. This suggests that while teachers are proficient in understanding their own emotions, they may benefit from additional training in recognizing and interpreting others' emotional cues.

Use of Emotions emerged as the dimension with the highest scores, especially for the statement "I always encourage myself to try my best," with a mean score of 4.40 (SD = 0.85), and "I am a self-motivating person," at 4.32 (SD = 0.85). The sub-total of 4.31 (SD = 0.87) reflects that these teachers have exceptional self-motivation qualities and goal-setting abilities, all of which are essential for success in both personal and professional spheres.

In Others-Emotions Appraisal, teachers achieved slightly lower scores with "I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally" and "I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions" both scoring 4.02 (SD = 0.94). This might be a big issue in managing work related challenges. The sub-total of 3.93 (SD = 0.98) indicates solid emotional control, though it is somewhat less pronounced compared to other dimensions.

Overall, the grand mean of 4.02 (SD = 0.92) suggests that teachers demonstrate strong emotional intelligence, particularly in self-motivation and self-awareness. What strikes here is the notable strength in self-motivation and understanding one's own emotions, which are critical for personal effectiveness. However, the relatively lower scores in regulating and understanding others' emotions highlight areas where further development could enhance teachers' overall emotional intelligence, potentially improving their interactions with students and colleagues.

Table 2
Emotional Intelligence of Teachers by District

Items by Dimensions	Lira		Wakiso	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Self- Emotions Appraisal				
I have a good sense of why I feel certain feelings most of the time.	3.79	0.88	3.75	0.89
I have a good understanding of my own emotions.	4.15	0.89	4.18	0.80
I really understand what I feel.	4.10	0.91	4.20	0.89
I always know whether I am happy or not.	4.41	0.80	4.35	0.96
Sub-total	4.10	0.87	4.12	0.89
Regulation of Emotions				
I always know my friends' emotions from their behaviour.	3.76	1.01	3.83	0.91
I am a good observer of others' emotions.	3.77	0.96	3.68	0.93
I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.	3.82	0.95	4.01	0.93
I have a good understanding of the emotions of people around me.	3.82	0.97	3.89	0.83
Sub-total	3.79	0.97	3.85	0.90
Use of Emotions				
I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them.	4.21	0.90	4.22	0.77
I always tell myself I am a competent person.	4.28	0.89	4.37	0.84
I am a self-motivating person.	4.31	0.87	4.36	0.77
I always encourage myself to try my best.	4.37	0.88	4.51	0.73
Sub-total	4.29	0.89	4.37	0.78
Others-Emotions Appraisal				
I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally.	4.01	0.95	4.06	0.87
I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions.	4.01	0.91	4.04	0.88
I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry.	3.71	1.08	3.90	1.03
I have good control of my emotions.	3.88	1.00	4.05	0.95
Sub-total	4.02	0.93	4.01	0.93
Average	4.05	0.92	4.09	0.89

In order to determine whether or not teachers' emotional intelligence is a problem in the two districts, the results were examined and presented as indicated in table 2 above. Regarding Self-Emotions Appraisal, it is evident from the mean scores for Lira and Wakiso, which range from 3.79 to 4.41 and 3.75 to 4.35, respectively signifies that the majority of teachers agreed with the items on the Emotional Intelligence scale since their mean Emotional intelligence score is close to four (04) for the Likert scale response "agree. Therefore the overall scores (mean = 4.10) for Lira and (mean = 4.12) for Wakiso demonstrate high level of emotional intelligence among most teachers for both groups. In regards to

Regulation of Emotions, results indicate generally an average level of proficiency in regulating emotions, across both groups with mean score of 3.79 (SD = 0.97) for Lira and mean = 3.85 (SD = 0.90) for Wakiso. This implies that teachers' sensitivity to the feelings and emotions of others, awareness of others' emotions, and knowledge and comprehension of the feelings of those around them need further reparation.

For Use of Emotions, an overall mean score of 4.29 (SD = 0.89) for teachers from Lira and 4.37 (SD = 0.78) for those from Wakiso shows that utilization of emotions across both groups was well demonstrated. This further signifies that these teachers are resilient, look at themselves as competent individuals, motivate and encourage themselves to try their best in whatever they do. For Emotional Appraisal, an overall mean score of 4.02 (SD = 0.93) for teachers from Lira and 4.01 (SD = 0.93) for Wakiso shows that most respondents from both groups are capable of controlling their temper, emotions and can calm down quickly when faced with challenges. Generally, an overall mean score for all items for respondents from Wakiso (4.09) and Lira (4.05), indicate that most respondents from both groups demonstrate high mean scores in various facets of emotional intelligence reflected by high levels of proficiency in self-emotions appraisal, utilizing emotions, understanding, and controlling emotions across both groups. While there are slight variations in mean scores between Lira and Wakiso, particularly evident in some items such as self-emotions appraisal and regulation of emotions, these differences are minimal.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Turnover Intention

The analysis for these variables were presented in terms of frequencies with corresponding percentages, mean and Standard Deviation. Turnover Intention was measured on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1= *Totally Disagree* (TD), 2= *Disagree* (D), 3= *Not Sure* (NA), 4= *Agree* (A), to 5= *Strongly Agree* (SA) and results obtained were as presented below:

Table 3

Turnover Intention of Teachers

Variables	SA		A		NS		D		SD		\bar{x}	σ
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
I feel frustrated and always think about leaving this job.	102	20.2	151	30.3	32	6.4	81	16.2	133	26.7	3.02	1.53
My concentration at work has reduced because I don't see any future in this job.	58	11.7	104	20.9	45	9.0	138	27.7	153	30.7	2.55	1.41
Sometimes I feel changing to another profession may be of help.	130	26.1	143	28.7	41	8.2	90	18.0	95	19.0	3.25	1.49
I can still leave if offered another job at the same compensation level but for a different job.	140	28.1	122	24.5	50	10.0	93	18.7	93	18.7	3.25	1.50
I always dream about getting another job that will better suit my personal needs.	192	38.5	144	28.5	32	6.4	66	13.2	65	13.0	3.67	1.43
I don't look forward to another day at my current job.	83	16.6	114	22.9	64	12.8	123	24.7	115	23.1	2.85	1.43
Grand mean											3.10	1.46

Results from table 3 above show that teachers frequently dream about finding a job that better meets their personal needs (mean = 3.67, SD = 1.43). This is an indicator of disillusionment among teachers within the teaching profession. Teachers also expressed a moderate inclination to explore other professions (mean = 3.25, SD = 1.49) and are open to changing jobs for similar compensation (mean = 3.25, SD = 1.50). Having the intention to leave for another job at a similar compensation level demonstrates high level dissatisfaction with the teaching profession. An overall mean score of 3.10 with a standard deviation of 1.46 from the table above shows a moderate level of turnover intention among teachers, reflecting a mix feeling of opinions on job satisfaction, retention and future plans.

Table 4*Turnover Intention of Teachers by District*

Items	Lira		Wakiso	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
I feel frustrated and always think about leaving this job.	3.07	1.56	2.82	1.44
My concentration at work has reduced because I don't see any future in this job.	2.55	1.41	2.55	1.42
Sometimes I feel changing to another profession may be of help.	3.29	1.50	3.09	1.45
I can still leave if offered another job at the same compensation level but for a different job.	3.30	1.50	3.04	1.49
I always dream about getting another job that will better -suit my personal needs.	3.70	1.45	3.52	1.33
I don't look forward to another day at my current job.	2.90	1.45	2.67	1.33
Grand mean	3.13	1.48	2.95	1.41

A mean score of 3.70 with a standard deviation of 1.45 for Lira and 3.52 (SD =1.33) for Wakiso clearly show that teaching profession does not meet personal needs of most teachers and they always dream about getting other jobs that may fill in this gap. A mean score of 2.55 for Lira and Wakiso with a SD of 1.41 and 1.42 respectively shows that most teachers still try to concentrate at work irrespective of the dissatisfaction they get from the job. This reflects either the passion for this profession or the need for survival.

4.3 Differences in the Level of Turnover Intention among Teachers from Lira and Wakiso

An independent sample t-test was conducted to test whether there is a significant difference in the level of turnover intention among teachers from Lira city and Wakiso district. Results obtained were as presented in table 5 that follows.

Table 5*Independent Sample t-test for Turnover Intention among Teachers from Lira and Wakiso*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means						
		Mean	SD	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI	
											Lower	Upper
TI	Lira	18.81	7.18	.90	.34	1.41	494	.16	1.12	.80	-.45	2.68
	Wakiso	18.42	7.40									

Key: TI = Turnover intention

Results from table 5 above show that there was no significant difference in level of turnover intention between teachers from Lira and Wakiso ($t=1.41$, $p>.05$) The scores for teachers from Lira (mean =18.80, SD = 7.18) and Wakiso (mean = 17.69, SD = 6.80) with a magnitude in the mean score (mean difference = 1.12, 95%, CI = -.45 to 2.68) reflects a very marginal variation in turnover intention among teachers from Lira and Wakiso, implying turnover intention is not only experienced in Lira but also in other parts of the country.

4.3.1 Hypothesis

The hypothesis stated that "There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intention". The relationship between these two constructs were determined using Pearson product moment correlation analysis and results obtained were as shown in table 6 that follows;

Table 6*Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between Emotional Intelligence and Turnover Intention*

Variables	Turnover intention	Emotional Intelligence
Turnover Intention	1.00	
Emotional Intelligence	-0.19*	1.00

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Results from table 6 above revealed a significant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and turnover intention ($r = -0.19$, $p < 0.05$). This implies higher level of emotional intelligence is associated with lower turnover intention. Thus, the significant relationship suggests that improving emotional intelligence among employees could potentially reduce their intention to leave the job. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions was rejected.

4.4 Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Turnover Intention

To examine the impact of emotional intelligence on turnover intention, bivariate regression analysis was conducted and results obtained were as presented in table 7 that follows:

Table 7

Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Turnover Intention

Hypothesis	Regression Weights	Beta Coefficient	R ²	F	t-value	p-value	Results
H ₀	EI → TI	-.19	.035	17.98	-4.24	.000	Rejected
$R = 0.19$ $F(1,491) = 17.98$							

Notes * $p < .001$. EI: Emotional Intelligence, TI: Turnover Intention

The dependent variable (Turnover Intention) was regressed on a predicting variable (Emotional Intelligence) to test the hypothesis. Results revealed that Emotional Intelligence significantly predict Turnover Intention $F(1,491) = 17.98$, $p < .001$, which indicates that Emotional Intelligence has a significant impact on turnover intention ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .001$). These results clearly indicate the negative effects of Emotional Intelligence on Turnover intention. Moreover, $R^2 = .035$ depicts that the model explains 3.50% of the variance in turnover intention. This implies there are other factors that might be more pronounced in triggering turnover intention.

4.5 Discussion

The hypothesis was stated that “there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions”. The finding of this study revealed a significant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and turnover intention ($r = -0.19$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that as employees' emotional intelligence increases, their intention to leave the job decreases. Emotional intelligence typically equips individuals with better coping mechanisms thus enhancing their ability to handle work related challenges. This indicates that fostering emotional intelligence in employees could be an effective strategy for reducing turnover intentions within an organization. These results align with a significant body of literature that highlights the role of emotional intelligence in reducing turnover intention. For instance, Khairuddin and Hussain (2021) observed that emotional intelligence has a negative association with turnover intention. In essence, elevated levels of emotional intelligence were found to enhance employees' commitment to their work while concurrently diminishing their propensity to seek alternative employment or institutions. This implies that emotionally intelligent employees possess enhanced capabilities to navigate work-related stressors and obstacles, thereby reducing their inclination to resign from their positions. Moreover, numerous studies have confirmed the negative relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intention across various professions (Ahmad et al., 2018; Akhtar et al., 2017; Giao et al., 2020). Even though this previous literature to some extent addresses the queries rooted in other industries outside of primary education, the findings obtained here clearly indicate that the emotional intelligence has the potency to trigger turnover intention of employees across different fields.

In agreement with this research findings, Rono and Kiptum (2017) also found out that administrators who exhibit low emotional intelligence and laxity are likely to demoralize their workforce, which lends credence to this claim. This could be as a result of their inability to handle work related challenges with objectivity and controlled emotion. This may ultimately trigger employees' intentions to leave or their actual turnover (Gara et al., 2021). Employees with the skill and capability to handle negative emotions are needed for most occupations (Matheri et al., 2018). This lessens the likelihood of needless conflicts arising between staff members within the company or organizations. In line with this findings, Kanyoru and Wabala (2021) found a negative and substantial association between the employees' intentions to leave their jobs in Kenyan telecommunications companies and their emotional intelligence. The negative association found between EI and turnover intention here indicates that employees' intention to depart reduces as their emotional intelligence rises. Workers with poor emotional regulation consistently face difficulties at work, and they are more likely to consider quitting (Mehboob, 2016).

Contrastingly, other studies present conflicting findings. Zahedi (2015) found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions among employees in the Gulian Province, suggesting that higher emotional intelligence might increase an individual's desire to leave, potentially due to increased awareness of better opportunities or dissatisfaction with their current job. Similarly, Brewster (2020) reported no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intention among nonprofit employees in the U.S further indicating that the impact of Emotional Intelligence on turnover intentions may vary depending on the context and the population studied.

It is likely that factors such as job satisfaction, leadership quality, and workplace culture interact with emotional intelligence to influence turnover intention, suggesting a more complex relationship than what is captured by a simple correlation. While the negative correlation between emotional intelligence and turnover intention is compelling, it is crucial to consider the broader context in which these findings are situated. Emotional intelligence may indeed buffer against turnover intention by enabling employees to manage their emotions, understand others, and navigate workplace

challenges more effectively. However, this relationship is likely moderated by other factors such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and organizational support. Employees with high emotional intelligence might still experience turnover intention if they perceive that there isn't any growth opportunities, inadequate compensation, or poor management, regardless of their emotional competence.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the field results, this study concluded that there is a significant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and turnover intention. This implies that as employees' emotional intelligence increases, their intention to leave reduces. Thus, as per this population, this significant relationship suggests that improving emotional intelligence among employees could potentially reduce their intentions to leave the job. Organizations aiming to reduce turnover intention may benefit from investing in programs that enhance emotional intelligence skills among their workforce. By fostering emotional intelligence, organisations could improve employee retention and create a more engaged and stable work environment.

5.2 Recommendations

Basing on the field results, the following recommended were drawn:

There is need to provide teachers with training courses on Emotional Intelligence. Implementation of self-awareness and self-regulation developmental programs can enable employees to enhance their capacity for emotional recognition and regulation. Such programs may include teaching emotional regulation techniques, helping staff members identify their emotional triggers, and raising self-awareness. The use of cognitive reframing a typical technique commonly used in cognitive behavioral treatment (CBT), can equally be adopted to enhance emotional intelligence of not only teachers but also other employees.

Applying Emotional Intelligence Assessment when hiring and selecting employees: To make sure that applicants have a minimum level of emotional intelligence (EI), emotional intelligence tests should be included in the recruitment process. This can guarantee employing new personnel who are capable of controlling their emotions and making constructive contributions to the organisation or institutions. Besides, employees with high emotional intelligence may not easily develop the intention to leave as a result of negative emotions that may arise from the workplace.

Match Employees to Suitable Roles: Employees with higher emotional intelligence may do well in jobs requiring a lot of interpersonal skills, including leadership or customer service. Stress and attrition can decrease when responsibilities are matched with people's emotional strengths. To prevent career mismatch and turnover intention, students shouldn't be forced to enroll for teaching profession when their potential, interest and other micro aspects fall in other fields.

Managers or school administrators should be properly introduced to all the facets of Emotional Intelligence and how they can be utilized. High emotional intelligence managers are better able to lead teams, resolve conflicts, and promote the wellbeing of their employees. These leaders should be taught self-regulatory measures, how to react with empathy, and manage stress in both themselves and their teams. This may help in reducing turnover intention created by harsh administrative leaders.

Creating a Supportive Work Environment. Leaders should encourage Psychological Safety at workplace. Anxiety, emotional outburst and burnout are less likely to occur when they feel psychologically safe. Promoting an atmosphere that supports staff members' personal and professional growth reduces turnover intention among workers. Besides, establishing peer support groups or mentorship programs might assist staff members in becoming more emotionally resilient because a sense of belonging and emotional validation can also be obtained through peer interactions.

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