LEADERSHIP AT THE CROSSROADS: NAVIGATING COMMITMENT AND TURNOVER IN KENYA'S UNIVERSITIES

Bonn Jonyo[1i],
Dorothy Owuor Jonyo[2]
[1]PhD Senior Research Fellow,
KCA University,
Kenya
[2]PhD,
TSC County Director,
Kenya

Abstract:

This conceptual study examines the complex interplay between leadership styles, organizational politics, and faculty loyalty in Kenyan universities, using Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) theory as an analytical lens. It explores how varied leadership behaviors from participatory and transparent to autocratic and exclusionary shape staff morale and turnover intentions in a higher education system strained by expansion, reduced funding, and heightened accountability. Drawing on contemporary literature, the paper highlights how inclusive leadership undergirds institutional cohesion, while politicized governance and inequitable treatment erode staff commitment. It offers a critical synthesis, underscoring the need for future empirical research and targeted governance reforms. This conceptual framework is designed to support policy and leadership reform in Kenya's higher education system by highlighting that effective supervisor–subordinate relationships are a key determinant in curbing attrition and reinforcing professional allegiance.

Keywords: leadership, organizational politics, loyalty, commitment, turnover intentions, leader-member exchange, employee retention, governance

1. Introduction

Kenya's higher education system is at a pivotal crossroads, confronting a complex interplay of massification, declining public funding, and intensified accountability demands (Omolo, 2021). These structural pressures have not only reshaped the operational dynamics of universities but have also foregrounded the centrality of leadership in managing institutional change. As universities grapple with these

---

[i] Correspondence: email bjonyo@gmail.com

challenges, internal politics and leadership practices have emerged as critical determinants of institutional climate, influencing both organizational cohesion and staff morale.

Recent research indicates that faculty and administrative staff are not solely motivated by extrinsic factors such as salaries or workloads. Rather, their commitment and decisions to stay or leave are profoundly shaped by the perceived fairness, inclusivity, and supportiveness of leadership (Amah & Ahiauzu, 2021; Kimathi & Mugo, 2019). Effective leadership marked by transparency, participatory governance, and responsiveness can foster a sense of belonging and professional fulfillment, even in resource-constrained environments (Ng'ethe, Iravo, & Namusonge, 2019).

This conceptual paper critically examines how leadership styles and university politics intersect to shape staff loyalty and turnover intentions in Kenyan universities. By situating this inquiry within broader discourses on organizational behavior and governance in African higher education, the paper contributes to a nuanced understanding of how leadership can serve either as a stabilizing force or a catalyst for attrition in academic institutions.

2. Statement of the Problem

Kenya's higher education landscape encompassing both public and private universities, is experiencing significant turbulence due to massification, funding uncertainties, governance challenges, and shifting stakeholder expectations. As institutions navigate these complexities, internal leadership dynamics and organizational politics have emerged as powerful, yet under-explored, determinants of employee commitment and retention. While public universities often struggle with bureaucratic inefficiencies and political interference, private institutions face pressure to maintain competitive performance and financial viability, sometimes at the expense of inclusive and ethical leadership practices. Despite growing concerns over staff turnover and eroding institutional loyalty, limited scholarly attention has been paid to how leadership behaviors and political climates across institutional types jointly shape employee experiences. This conceptual gap underscores the need to critically examine the intersection of leadership, organizational politics, and turnover intentions to inform more resilient and inclusive governance practices in Kenya's universities

2.1 Relevant Theory: Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory
This study is grounded in Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, which posits that the quality of relationships between leaders and subordinates significantly influences organizational outcomes. High-quality LMX relationships are built on trust, mutual respect, and reciprocal support, leading to increased employee commitment, job satisfaction, and retention (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In contrast, low-quality exchanges are characterized by formal, transactional interactions that often lead to disengagement and turnover.

In the context of Kenyan universities where leadership is frequently affected by political interference, unequal resource distribution, and opaque promotion practices, LMX theory offers a valuable lens for analyzing the relational dynamics that shape institutional stability. By focusing on the differential treatment of staff and its impact on organizational commitment, LMX helps explain how effective leadership can buffer against the negative effects of internal politics. As such, this theory provides a relevant framework for understanding the link between leadership practices, employee attitudes, and leadership turnover in Kenya's higher education sector (Amah & Ahiauzu, 2021).

The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory posits that leadership effectiveness stems from the quality of relationships between leaders and their subordinates. High-quality LMX relationships are characterized by trust, respect, and mutual obligation, while low-quality LMX relationships are transactional and limited (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In Kenyan universities, where politics often influence resource allocation, promotions, and recognition, LMX theory provides a valuable lens for examining how leadership quality affects employee attitudes and behaviors. High LMX can buffer the negative effects of organizational politics, enhancing commitment and reducing turnover intentions (Amah & Ahiauzu, 2021).

2.2 Higher Education Context in Kenya

Kenya's higher education sector has undergone rapid expansion over recent decades, driven by massification, the proliferation of universities, and a sequence of policy reforms aimed at widening access and improving quality. While these reforms have broadened educational opportunities, they have simultaneously intensified pressure on institutional capacity and quality assurance systems. Public universities, in particular, contend with chronic underfunding, overcrowded learning environments, aging infrastructure, and an unsustainable reliance on adjunct and contract faculty (Ng'ethe et al., 2019). These constraints have adversely affected instructional quality, research productivity, and student support services, thereby compromising the sector's ability to meet national development needs.

These structural challenges are compounded by the politicization of higher education governance. Frequent state interventions especially in leadership appointments and resource allocation have eroded institutional autonomy, weakened merit-based systems, and generated climates of mistrust and instability (Omolo, 2021). The cumulative impact has been a fragile academic ecosystem characterized by low staff morale, inconsistent organizational commitment, and elevated turnover rates. Such patterns are not unique to Kenya; similar dynamics have been observed in other rapidly expanding systems, including South Africa, Nigeria, and parts of Southeast Asia, where massification has outpaced institutional capacity and governance reforms.

To address these challenges, policy emphasis must shift from expansion to consolidation, prioritizing quality assurance, sustainable financing, leadership accountability, and institutional autonomy. Aligning Kenya's higher education governance with global best practices—such as performance-based funding models,

transparent leadership recruitment, and strengthened internal quality assurance mechanisms—will be essential for building institutional resilience and sustaining long-term academic excellence.

2.3 State Funding Reduction: Time-specific Data and Dynamics

Kenya's higher education sector is facing a deepening fiscal crisis, with state funding increasingly falling far short of institutional needs. In the 2025/2026 fiscal year, the State Department for Higher Education and Research requested KSh 264.4 billion, but received only KSh 142.3 billion. This represents a staggering 46.1% shortfall in recurrent funding a gap of KSh 122.1 billion and a 73.3% deficit in development allocations, amounting to KSh 9.6 billion. Such drastic underfunding is not merely a budgetary discrepancy; it signals a structural collapse in the financial foundations of public universities and TVET institutions.

This trend is not new. In 2023/2024, the recurrent funding requirement was KSh 153.9 billion, yet allocations amounted to only KSh 114.3 billion, leaving a gap of KSh 39.5 billion. Development funding was even more severely constrained: only KSh 3.3 billion was allocated against a need of KSh 12.4 billion, resulting in a KSh 9 billion shortfall. The recurring nature of these deficits indicates a chronic underinvestment that has progressively eroded institutional capacity.

The fiscal strain is compounded by the 2024/2025 funding shortfall faced by universities and TVET institutions, which totaled KSh 58.8 billion. Critical funding instruments such as capitation and loans were particularly under-resourced. For example, capitation received KSh 26.1 billion, far below the KSh 59.3 billion required. Such deficits do not merely constrain operations they fundamentally undermine the ability of institutions to deliver quality education, maintain infrastructure, and support research and innovation.

In short, the numbers tell a story of a sector being stretched to its breaking point. As state allocations shrink relative to demand, universities are forced into a cycle of cost-cutting, overcrowding, and compromised academic standards. Without urgent policy intervention and sustainable financing reforms, the fiscal crisis will continue to erode the very foundations of Kenya's higher education system. (Business Daily Africa).

2.4 Organizational Politics

Organizational politics in Kenyan universities characterized by opaque recruitment, ethnic favoritism, selective rule enforcement, and politicized promotions undermines fairness and trust (Balozi & Muturi, 2022). This environment produces low job satisfaction, stress, and high turnover intentions among staff (Olivier, 2020). When political maneuvering replaces merit, the academic culture becomes toxic, eroding commitment and institutional performance. Addressing these political dynamics is essential for safeguarding the integrity and sustainability of higher education.

2.5 Leadership and Loyalty: A Comparative Perspective

Leadership plays a central role in shaping institutional culture and moderating the impact of organizational politics within universities. Evidence from Kenyan higher education indicates that leadership style significantly influences employee attitudes and retention. Autocratic leadership, characterized by centralized decision-making and limited participatory input, has been associated with higher turnover intentions among university staff, whereas more participative approaches such as democratic or laissez-faire leadership tend to correlate with reduced turnover (Balozi & Muturi, 2022).

Transformational leadership, which emphasizes vision, inclusivity, and empowerment, has been linked to improved employee engagement, commitment, and job satisfaction in Kenyan universities. Within this context, transformational leaders contribute to organizational cohesion, reduce turnover-related costs, and align staff with institutional objectives. Empirical studies across Kenyan public universities further corroborate that transformational leadership enhances institutional performance by elevating engagement and productivity (Omolo, 2021).

In contrast, leadership practices marked by ethnic favoritism, nepotism, or political patronage undermine trust and weaken staff loyalty. Such patterns, documented in Kenyan public universities, suggest that leadership can either exacerbate or mitigate the corrosive effects of politicized governance. Comparative research in other higher education systems particularly in countries experiencing rapid expansion and governance pressures similarly indicates that inclusive, merit-based leadership is essential for maintaining organizational trust and stabilizing workforce commitment. Consequently, leadership that prioritizes transparency, equity, and professional merit emerges as a critical counterbalance to political interference in university governance.

2.6 Leadership Turnover and Funding Constraints: A Comparative Analysis

Leadership stability within Kenyan universities appears increasingly fragile, with high-profile cases highlighting the intersection of governance conflict and financial strain. At the University of Nairobi (UoN), for example, Vice Chancellor Prof. Peter Mbithi served from January 2015 until July 2019, with his tenure ending six months earlier than planned following a council decision. His successor, Prof. Stephen Kiama, was suspended in August 2024 amid governance disputes, and the council chair's appointment was revoked in February 2025. These episodes reflect repeated leadership transitions that may be symptomatic of deeper institutional stress, particularly where governance tensions coincide with resource constraints.

Although these cases suggest a potential link between leadership turnover and fiscal and governance instability, systematic cross-university data in Kenya remain limited. Nonetheless, international evidence indicates that leadership turnover often escalates during periods of financial austerity, political interference, or organizational turbulence. For instance, in South Africa, university leadership has been shown to be vulnerable to governance crises and funding volatility, which can trigger resignations and institutional instability (Citation Needed). Similarly, in Nigeria and Ghana, frequent

leadership changes have been associated with politicized governance and resource pressures, undermining long-term strategic continuity (Citation Needed).

These global parallels underscore a broader pattern: fiscal stress and governance uncertainty tend to destabilize leadership, thereby weakening institutional capacity to respond to crises and implement reform. In this context, Kenya's experience suggests that state funding reductions may not only constrain operations but also indirectly contribute to leadership instability, as universities navigate heightened stakeholder pressures, internal conflict, and accountability challenges.

To strengthen this line of inquiry, further research should compile systematic data across Kenyan universities to empirically assess the relationship between funding fluctuations and leadership turnover. Such evidence would be essential for developing governance reforms and financing strategies aimed at enhancing institutional resilience.

2.7 Employee Commitment and Turnover Intentions

Organizational commitment comprises three dimensions, affective, continuance, and normative commitment, each influencing turnover intentions differently. Meyer and Allen's (1991) foundational model defines affective commitment as emotional attachment, continuance commitment as cost-based attachment, and normative commitment as obligation-based loyalty.

Empirical findings reinforce the inverse relationship between these commitment types and turnover intentions. For instance, in Oman's public sector, higher levels of affective and continuance commitment significantly reduce turnover intentions, whereas normative commitment shows a weaker effect. A comprehensive regression analysis in an Islamic banking context similarly found strong negative correlations between all three commitment types and turnover intention, with each component contributing cumulatively to reduced attrition.

In Kenya's higher education context, structural and managerial faults such as delayed promotions, inconsistent evaluations, and poor recognition erode affective commitment and amplify turnover risks (as reported by (Kipkebut, 2020; Odhuno & Mungai, 2023). Conversely, institutions that foster ethical leadership, fairness, and inclusive environments experience stronger staff loyalty and retention (Amah & Ahiauzu, 2021).

Table 1: Summary Table of Key Data

Issue Addressed	Data Insights
Funding reductions by fiscal year	2023/24: Recurrent deficit KSh 39.5B, developmental deficit KSh 9B 2025/26: Recurrent shortfall KSh 122.1B (46.1%), development KSh 9.6B (73.3%)
Student-professor ratio	Current average: 563:1 2010: 774:1 Recommended ratios are often violated
Leadership transitions probability	UoN VC tenure changes: Mbithi (2015–2019), Kiama suspended in 2024—indicative of instability

Source: Business Daily

2.8 The Confluence of Leadership, Organizational Politics, and Turnover: A Comparative Perspective

Leadership behaviors and organizational politics are mutually reinforcing forces that significantly influence staff turnover dynamics. Evidence from Kenyan universities indicates that autocratic leadership characterized by centralized decision-making and limited participatory input correlates with higher turnover intentions among academic staff, whereas democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles are associated with lower turnover intentions. These findings align with broader global research demonstrating that participative and empowering leadership approaches tend to enhance retention in higher education and other organizational settings (Balozi & Muturi, 2022).

The Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) theory provides a useful framework for understanding these dynamics. High-quality leader–follower relationships characterized by trust, respect, and mutual obligation are associated with increased inclusion, predictability, and perceived fairness. Such relationships can buffer the adverse effects of organizational politics by reducing uncertainty, emotional strain, and perceived injustice. In contrast, when leaders are perceived as facilitators of political interference, staff disengagement and attrition tend to increase (Balozi & Muturi, 2022).

These patterns are not unique to Kenya. International evidence suggests that leadership quality and organizational politics jointly influence turnover in universities and other institutions. For example, studies in South Africa and Nigeria have documented how politicized governance and patronage undermine staff morale and increase turnover, whereas inclusive, merit-based leadership promotes stability and commitment (Amah & Ahiauzu, 2021). Similarly, research in European and North American contexts has shown that transparent, communicative, and fair leadership reduces workplace stress and improves retention, particularly in environments experiencing political or institutional turbulence (Citation Needed).

Overall, high-quality and inclusive leadership can counteract the corrosive effects of organizational politics and foster workplace environments that sustain employee commitment and reduce turnover. Consequently, leadership development and governance reforms that strengthen leader–member exchanges and promote transparency should be prioritized in higher education policy and institutional strategies.

2.9 Insights for Institutional Governance and Policy Development

Kenyan universities should reorient governance strategies to strengthen organizational loyalty, reduce staff attrition, and enhance institutional resilience. A foundational strategy is the development of leadership capacity, particularly through training academic leaders in ethical governance, emotional intelligence, and participatory management. Such capacity-building supports the emergence of principled, inclusive leadership that can effectively navigate political pressures and foster trust among staff.

Promoting transparency and meritocracy in human resource practices is also essential. Institutions should implement merit-based promotion systems with clear criteria, standardized procedures, and accessible appeal mechanisms. These measures

can help counteract arbitrary advancement and political favoritism, which have been associated with diminished trust and commitment (Balozi & Muturi, 2022). Kenya's earlier efforts to harmonize promotion criteria such as the 2014 initiative, illustrate both the potential and fragility of such reforms, as legal challenges and implementation gaps exposed vulnerabilities in institutional governance.

To reduce political interference, universities could consider establishing independent oversight bodies to safeguard key decisions on leadership appointments and resource allocation. Such mechanisms, when designed with clear mandates and accountability, can act as impartial gatekeepers that protect institutional autonomy and strengthen governance integrity.

Internationally, similar governance reforms have been pursued in contexts facing rapid expansion and political pressures. For example, in South Africa and Ghana, efforts to strengthen institutional autonomy and transparent leadership appointment processes have been central to improving governance and stabilizing academic environments. In European higher education systems, independent oversight and strengthened quality assurance frameworks have also been used to reinforce merit-based governance and reduce the influence of informal political networks (Bergsteedt, B., du Plessis Bergsteedt, B., du Plessis, 2025).

Finally, enhancing staff engagement is critical for sustaining commitment and reducing turnover. Institutionalizing feedback mechanisms, participatory decision-making forums, and staff development opportunities can foster a sense of inclusion and professional ownership. Such approaches are consistent with global best practices in higher education governance, which emphasize participatory leadership and stakeholder engagement as key drivers of institutional performance and resilience.

2.10 Professor-to-student Ratios

Kenya's higher education system is experiencing a deepening faculty capacity crisis. Currently, fewer than 1,000 professors serve approximately 562,925 students across 68 universities, equating to an average of 563 students per professor. This imbalance has intensified over time: in 2010, Kenya had 32 universities, about 177,175 students, and only 238 professors, resulting in an average ratio of 774 students per professor. Over the past decade, student enrolment in public universities increased by 70%, while the number of professors grew by only 11%, indicating that faculty expansion has not matched student growth.

The Commission for University Education (CUE) recommends discipline-specific faculty-to-student ratios, 1:10 in Applied Sciences, 1:15 in Arts & Humanities, 1:7 in Medical & Allied Sciences, 1:10 in Pure & Natural Sciences, and 1:18 in Social Sciences yet many universities far exceed these thresholds. Some institutions report ratios of 40:1, even when part-time staff are included (Business Daily Africa, 2024, May 10). Such disparities suggest that instructional quality, research supervision, and student support are increasingly compromised.

Internationally, similar challenges have been documented in rapidly expanding systems, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where massification has outpaced faculty recruitment and weakened academic quality. In contrast, many OECD countries maintain student-to-faculty ratios closer to 15:1, supported by sustained investment in academic staffing and quality assurance frameworks. This global comparison underscores the urgency of strategic interventions in Kenya, including accelerated recruitment, targeted retention incentives, and long-term investment in academic careers to align faculty capacity with enrolment growth (OECD, 9 September 2025).

2.11 Legal Dimension

Leadership in Kenya's universities is governed by the Universities Act, 2012 and other statutory frameworks which outline the legal obligations of university councils, vice-chancellors, and senior administrators. These legal structures mandate transparent recruitment, academic integrity, and accountability in governance. However, frequent leadership turnover and wavering commitment raise legal concerns, particularly around breach of contract, wrongful termination, and due process in leadership appointments or removals. Political interference and factional interests often undermine legally mandated procedures, threatening institutional autonomy and stability. The Employment Act and Public Officers Ethics Act further require leaders to uphold integrity, fairness, and commitment to public service. Persistent turnover disrupts continuity and violates the legal principle of legitimate expectation by staff and students for stable, effective leadership. Courts have occasionally intervened, highlighting the need for adherence to the law in governance disputes. Thus, legal safeguards must be reinforced to protect universities from erratic leadership transitions and to uphold the rule of law. Strengthening internal dispute resolution mechanisms and enforcing statutory procedures is essential to balancing leadership transitions with institutional integrity. Ultimately, a commitment to legality in leadership practices is critical for sustainable growth and public trust in Kenya's higher education system.

3. Summary of the Findings

Governance Focus	Policy Action Highlight
Leadership Development	Train principals in ethical, empathetic, and participatory practices
Promotion Transparency	Enforce standardized, merit-based advancement processes
Political Independence	Introduce oversight mechanisms to protect institutional decisions from undue influence
Employee Engagement	Institutionalize inclusive forums and structured feedback loops
Staff Welfare	Invest in health, mentorship, and research capacity-building initiatives

Finally, prioritizing staff welfare through mental health support, mentorship programs, and research opportunities strengthens employee attachment and productivity.

4. Conclusion

This paper highlights that the intersection of leadership dynamics and organizational politics is a critical determinant of employee loyalty and turnover in Kenyan universities. Through the lens of Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) theory, it demonstrates that high-quality leader–staff relationships characterized by trust, fairness, and mutual obligation—can effectively buffer the destabilizing impacts of political opacity and resource scarcity. In an environment marked by rapid expansion, funding constraints, and governance pressures, the capacity of leaders to cultivate inclusive and transparent organizational cultures becomes indispensable.

Empirical evidence underscores that leadership style directly influences turnover intentions: autocratic and politically driven leadership practices increase perceptions of injustice, elevate psychological strain, and heighten attrition risks. Conversely, democratic, participatory, and transformational leadership approaches reduce uncertainty, enhance engagement, and strengthen organizational commitment. These patterns are consistent with international scholarship that links inclusive leadership with higher retention and improved institutional performance, particularly in higher education systems experiencing massification and resource limitations.

Consequently, addressing staff attrition in Kenyan universities requires more than financial remedies or administrative adjustments; it requires deliberate, human-centered governance reform. Institutional strategies should prioritize leadership development, merit-based recruitment and promotion, and robust mechanisms for transparency and accountability. Such reforms are essential not only to mitigate the corrosive effects of organizational politics but also to sustain institutional resilience, academic quality, and long-term development goals. Ultimately, inclusive leadership is not merely an ideal—it is a strategic necessity for preserving the integrity and sustainability of higher education in Kenya.

4.1 Policy-Oriented Recommendations
4.1.1 Institutionalize Leadership Capacity Building
Develop mandatory leadership development pathways that equip university leaders with competencies in ethical governance, emotional intelligence, participatory management, and digital leadership. Training should emphasize inclusive decision-making, crisis management, and adaptive leadership to navigate evolving academic ecosystems, including hybrid work environments and digital transformation.

4.1.2 Enforce Transparent Promotion and HR Practices

Implement standardized, merit-based promotion and recruitment systems with clearly defined criteria, open competition, and structured appeal mechanisms. Integrate digital HR platforms to enhance transparency and auditability, reduce perceptions of bias, and strengthen institutional trust and legitimacy.

4.1.3 Strengthen Quality Assurance and Accountability

Introduce robust internal quality assurance mechanisms that monitor governance, leadership performance, and institutional integrity. Regular audits and external reviews should be institutionalized to ensure adherence to standards, ethical conduct, and equitable treatment across academic units.

4.1.4 Minimize Political Interference

Establish independent oversight bodies comprising university council members, faculty representatives, and external stakeholders to provide checks and balances in leadership appointments, resource allocation, and strategic decision-making. Such bodies should be insulated from political patronage to protect institutional autonomy and governance credibility.

4.1.5 Improve Employee Engagement and Well-being

Institutionalize comprehensive staff well-being frameworks, including periodic feedback mechanisms, mentoring and career development programs, and accessible psychological support services. Addressing burnout, stress, and morale is essential for sustaining employee commitment in high-pressure academic environments.

4.1.6 Monitor and Evaluate Leadership Impact

Integrate leadership quality and staff retention indicators into institutional performance dashboards. Regularly track metrics such as leadership effectiveness, workplace climate, turnover rates, and employee engagement to inform governance reforms and strengthen accountability.

By embedding these strategies into institutional policy and governance frameworks, Kenyan universities can transform leadership from a source of attrition into a catalyst for staff loyalty, institutional stability, and academic excellence ultimately fostering resilient and high-performing academic communities.

Ethical Approval

This study did not involve human or animal participants. It is based on secondary data, policy review, and conceptual analysis.

Acknowledgments

Creative Commons License Statement

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

About the Author(s)

Bonn Odera Jonyo (PhD) is a scholar specializing in leadership and change management with a research focus on post-conflict governance and transitional justice in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. His work critically examines the role of inclusive leadership in rebuilding fragile institutions, designing participatory governance models, and managing reform in post-authoritarian contexts. Dr. Jonyo's interdisciplinary research bridges the fields of political science, development studies, and organizational leadership, with particular attention to how national and local actors interact in shaping durable peace processes. Currently a Senior Research Fellow at KCA University, Kenya.

Dorothy Owuor Jonyo (PhD) is a researcher in education administration with a specialization in teacher management systems across African contexts. Her research explores the administrative structures and human resource strategies that support educational equity, institutional accountability, and teacher development in transitional and post-conflict settings. Dr. Dorothy brings a deep understanding of how education policy reform intersects with broader national development goals and contributes to peacebuilding through inclusive service delivery. Currently, the Teacher Service Commission Country Director, Kenya.

References

Amah, O.E. and Ahiauzu, A.I. (2021), "Employee commitment and turnover: The role of leadership style in Nigerian universities", Journal of Organizational Psychology, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 11-25.

Balozi, F. and Muturi, W. (2022), "Organizational politics and employee turnover in public universities in Kenya", International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management, Vol. 10 No. 6, pp. 45-58.

Bergsteedt, B., du Plessis, A. Reimagining transformation through strategic thinking and accountable governance in the South African public university system. *High Educ* (2025). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-025-01517-w

Business Daily Africa. (2024, May 10). Varsities, TVETs face Sh59bn funding hole. Retrieved from https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/bd/corporate/education/varsities-tvets-face-sh59bn-funding-hole-4931032

Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. The Leadership Quarterly, 6(2), 219-247. https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(95)90036-5

Kipkebut, D.J. (2020), "Organizational commitment and turnover intentions among academic staff in Kenyan universities", Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 1–14.

Ng'ethe, J.M., Iravo, M.E. and Namusonge, G.S. (2019), "Determinants of academic staff retention in public universities in Kenya", International Journal of Education and Research, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 233–248. Retrieved from https://ijhss.thebrpi.org/journals/Vol_2_No_13_July_2012/22.pdf

Odhuno, J. and Mungai, M. (2023), "Ethical leadership and staff retention in public universities in Kenya", Journal of Human Resource and Leadership, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 1–14.

OECD (2025). Education at a Glance, 9 September 2025 OECD Report. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/09/education-at-a-glance-2025_c58fc9ae.html

Olivier, J. (2020), "Higher education under siege: Politics, corruption, and resistance in the global South", Global Education Review, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 45–60.

Omolo, J.O. (2021), "Governance and the crisis of public universities in Kenya", African Journal of Education Studies, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp. 201–215.

Republic of Kenya. (2003). *Public Officer Ethics Act, No. 4 of 2003*. National Council for Law Reporting with the Authority of the Attorney-General. Retrieved from https://www.kenyalaw.org

Republic of Kenya. (2007). *Employment Act, No. 11 of 2007*. National Council for Law Reporting with the Authority of the Attorney-General. Retrieved from https://www.kenyalaw.org

Republic of Kenya. (2012). *Universities Act, No. 42 of 2012*. National Council for Law Reporting with the Authority of the Attorney-General. Retrieved from https://www.kenyalaw.org

The Star. (2023, May 17). Higher education state department faces Sh39.5bn deficit. Retrieved from https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/realtime/2023-05-17-higher-education-state-department-faces-sh395bn-deficit/