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INTENTION TO LEAVE AMONG MEDICAL  
WORKERS OF MULAGO NATIONAL REFERRAL  
HOSPITAL, UGANDA

Paul Okatege  
Prof. Peter O. K'Obonyo, PhD  
Dr. Mercy Flora Oluoch, PhD  
Dr. Mercy Munjuri, PhD

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**THE INFLUENCE OF PERSON – JOB FIT ON INTENTION TO LEAVE AMONG MEDICAL WORKERS OF MULAGO NATIONAL REFERRAL HOSPITAL, UGANDA**

Paul Okatege<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Peter O. K’Obonyo, PhD<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Mercy Flora Oluoch, PhD<sup>3</sup>,  
Dr. Mercy Munjuri, PhD<sup>4</sup>

## Abstract

**This study aimed at establishing the influence of person – job fit on intention to leave among medical workers of Mulago National Referral Hospital in Uganda. The review of literature revealed that many studies had been conducted on person – job fit and intention to leave. However, most of these studies have focused on the nature of fit perceptions, person – organisation fit and intention to leave the organisation, in which the organisation has been the unit of analysis and not the individual. These studies did not explain fully the influence of person – job fit on employee intention to leave which created a gap that this study sought to address. Hypothesis was formulated to the research the question. The study adopted a cross sectional descriptive survey design. A population of 1,007 was used for the study and a sample of 475 medical workers including Director, Deputy Director, Senior Consultant, Consultant, Medical Officer, Nurses and Other Allied workers was used. A structured questionnaire with likert type statements was used for data collection. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis. The findings of the study indicate a positive relationship between person – job fit and intention to leave and thus the hypothesis that person – job fit influences intention to leave was confirmed. The results of this study have contributed to the job characteristics theory which posits that job characteristics are important determinants of work outcome and that they vary in their contribution to intention to leave thus providing reference for further studies. It is recommended that Mulago National Referral Hospital should improve the fit between employees and their jobs and recognize the combination of antecedents of intention to leave. The study had a limitation in using cross sectional survey method of data collection which limits the ability to establish and prove causativeness and changes over time.**

**Key words:** Person – Job Fit, Intention to Leave, Mulago National Referral Hospital, Uganda

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<sup>1</sup> PhD Candidate, Department of Business Administration - Faculty of Business and Management Sciences, University of Nairobi, Nairobi – Kenya: *paul.wach1@gmail.com*

<sup>2,3,4</sup> Department of Business Administration -Faculty of Business and Management Sciences, University of Nairobi, Nairobi – Kenya

## INTRODUCTION

In organizations, the consequences of turnover are significant and intention to leave among staff result in poor service delivery, negative critical psychological states, and actual turnover (Wheeler, 2007). This is because there appears to be a failure in congruence between employees' needs and abilities, and jobs resulting in most employees leaving their jobs (Carless, 2005; Purani et al, 2008; Wheeler, 2007).

Person – job fit has for long been a subject of discussion in the medical profession (Hagopian, 2009). A country with a good health care system will have medical workers whose skills, abilities and attitudes are aligned with the demands of their jobs resulting in a healthy dependable workforce and a thriving economy (World Health Organization, 2017). In Uganda, patients spend more than USD 200 million per annum on medical treatment overseas (Omaswa, 2009). The inefficient health care system has affected wellbeing and slowed economic development, further affecting the health sector. Because of this situation, Mulago National Referral Hospital does not have staff, money and equipment needed for patients resulting in poor person – job fit and a workforce that is exposed to disease (Hagopian, 2009; Omaswa 2009; Lwamafa, 2006; Kitanda, 2008). Despite being the biggest and main referral hospital, Mulago National Referral Hospital has a high rate of attrition and yet Uganda has a significant shortage of medical workers. The hospital lacks resources and equipment, and is severely understaffed (Omaswa, 2009). Health personnel are constantly looking for improved opportunities and a more satisfying work atmosphere elsewhere (Kitanda, 2008; Lwamafa et al., 2006). It is clear that there is a need for a detailed study on person-job fit for Mulago medical

workers (Huang, 2005; Sekiguchi, 2007; Lwamafa et al., 2006).

Person – job fit is the degree to which a jobholder's skills, abilities, and qualities are compatible with the demands of the job. Edwards (2008) defines two primary conceptualizations of person-job fit, which are demands – abilities and needs – supplies fit. Demands-abilities fit occurs when the employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities are congruent with what the job requires, and the needs – supplies fit occurs when a workers' requirements, needs and wishes are addressed by the jobs that they do. Scroggins (2007) proposes self-concept job-fit in addition to demand-abilities and needs-supplies fit (Kristof et al., 2005). Person – job fit is a result of the assessment of the demands of a job through job analysis in which the job content, context and outcomes are examined, identifying essential tasks to be performed and the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to perform the job tasks (Kristoff et al., 2005). When a match in the resulting job tasks to be performed and the requisite skills, knowledge and abilities to perform the tasks is achieved, then a high degree of person – job fit is achieved.

The three dimensions of fit indicate the nature of fit perceptions adopted by researchers on person-job fit (Kristof et al., 2005). Demand–Abilities is the extent to which a jobholder's abilities are consistent with what the job demands (Cable et al, 2002; Edwards, 2008). Needs–Supplies fit is the degree to which the intents, desires and needs of the employee are aligned to the supplies of the job for those intensions and the extent to which the job satisfies those desires (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Edwards, 2008). Scroggins (2007) proposed the self-concept – job fit that is defined as the congruence between the jobholder's self-

concept and the job that the jobholder performs. This happens when the execution of responsibilities yields observations, views and a state of mind congruent with the individuals' understanding of who they are or the kind of person they desire to be (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Liu et al, 2015).

Intention to leave characterizes a situation where employees think about quitting and generally lack continuity (Wheeler et al., 2007; Jourdian, 2010; Morrel et al, 2008). It is characterized by an employee's frequency of thought about leaving, willingness to leave amidst available opportunities, alternative career choices, and the likelihood that an employee will leave the organization (Wheeler et al., 2007). While actual quitting behavior is the focus of many employers (Morrel et al., 2008), intention to leave is argued to be a strong surrogate indicator of actual leaving (Purani, 2008). From a research perspective, there is practical merit that once people have actually left the organization, there is little likelihood to understand their prior situation. The validity of studying intention to leave is in the works of Jourdian (2010) in which intention to leave is found to be an accurate indicator of actual leaving. Thus, there is need to study what determines such intentions (Carless, 2005).

Intention to leave is a useful variable in explaining job related behavior (Purani, 2008) and an employee may intend to quit and not quit, and therefore this may result in job related behavior such as absenteeism and withdrawal. Intention to leave results when there is an interface between perceived psychological interest of leaving one organization and perceived comfort of movement from that organization. In this process, the extent to which the measures of behavioral intention and behavior match, the consistency of the intention over time, and

the extent to which the actual decision to leave is in the individual's control are all important determinants of actual leaving (Jourdian, 2010).

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Intention to leave characterizes a situation in which an employee thinks about quitting and generally lacks continuity (Jourdian and Chenevert, 2010), has an acute awareness and interest in job opportunities elsewhere and alternative career choices, and is actively searching for a job (Lum et al., 1998; Aktas, 2014). Person- job fit is one of the variables reliably found to lead to intention to leave. Demand – abilities fit and needs – supplies fit are two fundamental facets of the person-job fit theory (Edwards, 2008). Demands-abilities fit arises when the jobholder's abilities, knowledge and skills match with job requirements. Needs – supplies fit arises when the jobholder's requirements, requests, or preferences are satisfied by the job. In addition to demand – abilities and needs – supplies fit, Scroggins (2007) proposed Self Concept-Job fit in which employees seek out those jobs that give them self-fulfilling and confirming information that the perceived self is the actual self. These three forms of fit demonstrate the nature of fit dimensions in person-job fit (Kristof et al., 2005).

Person-job fit is a significant determinant of intention to leave (Huang, 2005; Sekiguchi, 2007; Edwards, 2008; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The relationship between person-job fit and intention to leave may be influenced by incidental variables and attitudes that could lead to intention to leave (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The stronger the fit between an employee and the job, the less likely the employee will leave the job. In contrast, Wheeler et al., (2007); Resick et al., (2007) and Aktas (2014) found a weak

effect of person – job related variables on intention to leave, but rather indirect effects through the experience of job related attitudes and other variables, therefore suggesting that there is an indirect relationship between person-job fit and intention to leave. This highlights a gap in the relationship between person-job fit and intention to leave.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross sectional descriptive survey design. The target population of the study was all medical workers at Mulago National Referral Hospital. Mulago National Referral Hospital employs approximately 1,007 medical workers who include Director/ Deputy Director, Senior Consultant, Consultant, Medical Officer, Nursing, Other Allied Health Workers. The other allied health workers include Technician, Attendant, Radiographer, Sonographer, Physicist, Laboratory Technologist, Laboratory Assistant, among others (Mulago National Referral Hospital Staffing List, 2019). Data obtained from Mulago National Referral Hospital Staffing List (2019) provided a total number of 1,007 medical workers in Mulago Hospital Complex.

Using the Krejcie and Morgan table (1970), 475 (four hundred and seventy-five)

respondents were selected to constitute a sample. A stratified random sampling method was used to sample the respondents. The strata comprised Director/ Deputy Director, Senior Consultant, Consultant, Medical Officer, Nursing, Other Allied Health Workers (Mulago National Referral Hospital Staffing List, 2019). A simple random sample was obtained for each stratum using proportionate stratified sampling methods (Sakaran, 2003; Lenth, 2001). A simple linear regression model was used to test the direct relationship between Person – Job Fit and Intention to Leave (ITL).

## 3. ANALYSIS, RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The hypothesis formulated was that:

***H<sub>1</sub>: Person – Job Fit influences Intention to Leave among staff of Mulago National Referral Hospital, Uganda***

To test this hypothesis, an index was created for Person – Job Fit variable by computing composite score for the three dimensions namely demands – abilities, needs – supplies and self-concept – job fit. Simple linear regression was used to test the hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 1

**Table 1: Model Summary**

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.571 <sup>a</sup>	0.326	0.324	0.94788	0.326	200.935	1	416	0.000
ANOVA									
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
1	Regression	180.537	1	180.537	200.935	.000 <sup>b</sup>			
	Residual	373.769	416	0.898					
	Total	554.306	417						
Coefficients									
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.			
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	3.206	0.046		69.146	0.000			
	PJF	-1.126	0.079	-0.571	-14.175	0.000			

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Leave

b. Predictors: (Constant), Person – Job Fit

As shown in Table 1, correlation coefficient for the relationship between Person – Job Fit and Intention to Leave is R=.571. This means that there is a moderate positive relationship between Person – Job Fit and Intention to Leave. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) = 0.326 indicates that 32.6% of the variation in intention to leave is accounted for by the changes in person – job fit. The remaining 67.4% is explained by other factors not in this study. Analysis of variance (F=200.935, P-value = .000<0.05) confirmed the overall significance of the model. Thus, the regression model was fit for prediction. The results further indicated that beta coefficient for person – job fit

was statistically significant ( $\beta = -0.571, t = -14.175, P\text{-value}=0.000<0.05$ ), suggesting that for every one unit increase in person job fit, intention to leave decreases by 0.571 units, holding other factors constant. From the forgoing, the hypothesis that Person – Job Fit influences Intention to Leave was confirmed.

The results are consistent with the findings of Huang, (2005); Sekiguchi, (2007); Edwards, (2008); and Kristof-Brown et al., (2005) who found that person-job fit was a significant determinant of intention to leave. However, they suggested that the relationship between person-job fit and intention to leave may be influenced by incidental variables and attitudes. In

addition, Wheeler et al., (2007); Resick et al., (2007) and Aktas (2014) found a weak effect of person – job fit related variables on intention to leave, but rather indirect effects through the experience of job related attitudes and other variables, therefore suggesting that there is an indirect relationship between person-job fit and intention to leave.

The predictive model was substituted as follows:

**ITL = 3.206 – 0.571PJF**, where ITL = Intention to Leave and PJF = Person – Job Fit.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that person – job fit influences intention to leave among medical workers at Mulago National Referral Hospital, Uganda. The needs of employees and supplies from the job; demands of the job and the abilities; and self-views and evaluations of employees are important in determining this relationship.

Demands – abilities and self – concept job fit are more important determinants of person job fit as compared to needs – supplies. This indicates that different facets of person – job fit vary in determining intention to leave. This is consistent with the findings of Aldag and Brief (1977). The hypothesis that Person – Job Fit influences Intention to Leave among medical workers at Mulago National Referral Hospital, Uganda was thus confirmed.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

##### *Recommendation for Theory*

The study outcomes majorly support the propositions of the theory of Job Characteristics. The study findings indicated a moderate positive relationship between person – job fit and intention to leave. This finding supports the job characteristics theory which assumes that job characteristics are an important determinant of work-related outcomes such as intention to leave. The theory's assumption that it is possible for a single job factor in the model to explain all other factors is however contradicted. The findings of this study indicated that all job facets including needs – supplies, demands – abilities, and self-concept job are important contributors in determining person – job fit, and not any single one of them on its own demonstrates the influence of all other factors. In addition, the job characteristics theory assumes that there is potential that combinations of the person – job fit facets are more important influencers than others. This is supported by the current study finding that demands – abilities are major influencers of intention to leave compared to self – views and needs – supplies.

Managers therefore need to focus on all job characteristics but understand that different job characteristics drive quit decisions in varying degrees and they should focus more on the structure of jobs, employee skills, knowledge and training that fit the job requirements, employee resources and abilities to solve problems on the job, actual job performance, and building confidence for employees.

### ***Recommendation for Policy***

Many National Policy documents have focused on the work environment and the organisation and less on the individual. The study finding that person – job fit influences intention to leave means that it is important for organisations to emphasize the examination policies on the needs of the employee and what the job offers, job demands such as education, professional development, time, the abilities of employees, and realistic job reviews.

### ***Recommendation for Practice***

From the findings, realistic job reviews for potential medical workers including medical students is important to align job dimensions with the potential professionals. This can be done through professional development and curriculum given that Mulago National Referral Hospital is the largest teaching referral hospital in Uganda. It is important to improve the perceived nature of fit between employees and their jobs.

The degree to which a job holder's skills, abilities, and qualities are compatible with the demands of the job goes a long way in improving employee retention. This requires that education, training, and continuous professional development be aligned to job demands. There is also a need to improve needs – supplies fit in which workers' requirements, needs and wishes are addressed by the jobs that they do in order to improve the degree to which the intents, desires and needs of the employee are aligned to the supplies of the job for those intentions and the extent to which the job satisfies those desires.

### ***Recommendation for Future Research***

Long term longitudinal studies are the preferred way to study progress of relationships. Noting that individual perceptions change over time depending on the context, a longitudinal study would show how the relationship between person – job fit and intention to leave progresses overtime more than at only one time.

From this study, there are many other factors that influence intention to leave. Huang (2005); Kristof-Brown et al., (2005); Sekiguchi (2007); and Edwards (2008) found that person-job fit is a significant determinant of intention to leave. However, they also found that there are other variables that explain this relationship and that could lead to intention to leave. This is further confirmed by Wheeler et al., (2007); Resick et al., (2007) and Aktas (2014) who found a weak effect of person – job related variables on intention to leave, but rather indirect effects through the experience of job related attitudes and other variables, therefore suggesting that an indirect relationship exists. This study found that 32.6% variation in intention to leave is attributed to person – job fit. There is opportunity for further research and exploration of the other antecedents of intention to leave to contribute to the full understanding of intention to leave.

This study focused on intention to leave. There is need for a further study to establish and differentiate between intention to leave organisation and intention to leave the job. Wheeler et al., (2004) found that a lack of fit results in negative attitudes and states which lead to a systematic sequence of mental evaluations starting with intention to leave the organization. While researchers



generally accept this process, it is ambiguous and there is evidence to show that intention to leave is complex and not straightforward. As such, the latter phenomenon requires more research that is empirical because intention to leave can be intended for not only a specific organization but also the job.

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