

Influence of Professional Development Opportunities and Organizational Commitment on Employee Retention through Employee Engagement in Private Higher Education

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Abstract

Employee retention is a critical challenge in open, distance, and digital education (ODDE) higher education institutions, significantly impacting institutional stability and educational quality. This study aims to investigate the relationships between Organizational Commitment (OCMT), Employee Engagement (EE), and Employee Retention (ER), alongside the role of Professional Development Opportunities (PDO) as a mediating factor. A quantitative research approach was utilized, employing a structured survey to collect data from 410 employees, yielding a sample size of 311 valid responses for analysis. The data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), focusing on pathway coefficients and coefficients of determination. Hypothesis testing results indicated significant relationships, underscoring the importance of fostering organizational commitment to enhance employee retention through engagement. Future research should explore longitudinal aspects, cultural differences, and the technological influence on PDO. Moreover, practical implications suggest that institutions should focus on developing a supportive culture, tailored professional

development programs, and effective feedback mechanisms to improve employee engagement and retention. By addressing these areas, ODDE institutions can create a more motivated workforce, ultimately bolstering their educational impact and success. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into effective strategies for enhancing employee retention within the evolving landscape of higher education, emphasizing the need for continuous investment in employee growth and engagement.

Keywords: Organizational Commitment, Professional development Opportunities, Employee Engagement, Employee Retention

Introduction

Employee retention in private higher education institutions (PHEIs) is critical for maintaining the quality of education and fostering a stable learning environment (Bukhatir et al., 2023). Retaining skilled faculty and staff not only ensures the continuity of academic programs but also contributes to institutional reputation and student satisfaction (Zamri, 2023). High turnover rates can severely disrupt the learning process, leading to a loss of institutional knowledge and impacting the overall effectiveness of educational delivery (Mather & Bam, 2025). Currently, various issues and trends affect employee retention in PHEIs worldwide (Kebah et al., 2019). One prominent trend is the increasing competition for skilled academic staff, as institutions compete not just locally but also on a global scale (Verma & Kaur, 2024). Additionally, many educators are seeking positions that offer better work-life balance, professional development opportunities, and supportive work environments (Columna & Garcia, 2024). Economic pressures and budget constraints have also led to layoffs, resulting in diminished job security and morale, driving valuable employees away (McClure & Sallee, 2025). Recent global events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have further compounded challenges, with shifts toward remote learning necessitating new skills and adaptability from faculty and staff (Kebah et al., 2019). Despite recognizing the importance of retention, there remain significant research gaps regarding the unique factors influencing employee turnover in PHEIs (Pujianto et al., 2025). Most studies tend to focus on public institutions, leaving a dearth of literature specifically addressing the motivations and challenges faced by employees in private settings. Furthermore, there is limited understanding of how institutional culture, management practices, and professional development opportunities directly relate to retention rates within these institutions (Agboola, 2025). Problems in employee retention for PHEIs stem from various sources, including inadequate compensation, limited career advancement opportunities, and challenges related to job satisfaction (Apraku, 2025). When employees feel undervalued or unsupported, their likelihood of seeking alternative employment increases (Li et al., 2020). Additionally, PHEIs often face the challenge of attracting diverse talent, making it imperative to foster inclusive environments that encourage retention (Mouloudj et al., 2025). The significance of this study extends to various stakeholders, including policymakers, academic institutions, educators, and students. For policymakers, understanding employee retention can inform strategies that enhance workforce stability in the educational sector. For higher education institutions, implementing effective retention strategies can lead to improved academic performance and overall institutional success. Academicians can benefit from research insights to refine their management practices, while students experience the direct impact of stable faculty on their educational outcomes. Addressing employee retention in PHEIs is vital not only for institutional stability but also for advancing educational quality and student experience. By exploring these dimensions, this research aims to provide valuable insights that contribute to

the ongoing discourse in higher education and inform future strategies for improvement. This study aims to assess the direct and indirect relationship between professional development opportunities and organizational commitment, with employee retention with employee engagement as a mediator in private higher education institutions.

Literature Review

Underpinning Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) posits that human relationships are formed based on the exchange of resources, perceived rewards, and costs (Blau, 1964). According to this theory, individuals seek to maximize their benefits while minimizing their costs in relationships, including those in organizational settings. This framework is particularly useful in understanding workplace dynamics, where employees expect to receive certain returns from their organizations for their contributions. In the proposed model, professional development and organizational commitment serve as independent variables that influence employee engagement, which acts as a mediating variable affecting employee retention. According to SET, when organizations invest in professional development, they enhance employees' skills and competencies, leading employees to feel more valued and engaged. This perceived investment can foster a sense of loyalty and commitment to the organization, as employees recognize that their employer is committed to their growth. Additionally, high levels of organizational commitment often correlate with increased employee engagement. Employees who feel aligned with the organizational values and goals are more likely to be emotionally invested in their work, thereby increasing their engagement levels. As employee engagement grows, employees are less likely to leave the organization, leading to improved employee retention. Thus, Social Exchange Theory effectively illustrates how investments in professional development and fostering organizational commitment promote higher levels of employee engagement, ultimately enhancing employee retention in private higher education institutions.

Relationship between Organizational Commitment, Employee Engagement & Employee Retention

The relationship between Organizational Commitment and Employee Retention is critically enhanced by the role of Employee Engagement as a mediating variable in higher education institutions. Organizational Commitment refers to the emotional attachment and identification employees have with their institution, which significantly influences their decision to remain employed. When faculty and staff feel committed to their organization, they are more likely to be motivated, productive, and loyal. Employee Engagement acts as a bridge in this relationship. Engaged employees who are committed to their organization are more likely to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation, leading to enhanced performance and a greater likelihood of staying with the institution (Intaratat et al., 2024). Research indicates that perceived organizational support, employee empowerment, and a supportive work environment further amplify this dynamic by positively influencing employee engagement and commitment (Hilal, 2023; Putra & Ketut, 2024). Conversely, low levels of engagement can detrimentally impact retention, as disengaged employees may feel disconnected from the institution's goals and values, prompting them to seek opportunities elsewhere. Additionally, factors such as organizational culture and employer branding play significant roles in fostering commitment and engagement (Ardebilpour et al., 2024; Chopra et al., 2024). In higher education settings, fostering a culture of engagement through

professional development, supportive leadership, and a positive work environment can strengthen organizational commitment, ultimately improving employee retention rates (Mohamad & Osman, 2025). Furthermore, recognizing and rewarding employees' contributions can enhance their sense of belonging and commitment. Thus, addressing both organizational commitment and engagement is essential for creating a stable and effective workforce in higher education institutions while ensuring long-term institutional success. Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed for this study:

H1: There is a relationship between organizational commitment and employee engagement toward employee retention in private higher education institutions.

H2: There is a relationship between organizational commitment and employee retention in private higher education institutions.

H3: There is a mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between organizational commitment and employee retention in private higher education institutions.

Relationship between Professional Development Opportunities, Employee Engagement & Employee Retention

The relationship between Professional Development Opportunities and Employee Retention is significantly influenced by Employee Engagement as a mediating variable within higher education institutions. Professional development encompasses training, workshops, and growth opportunities that enhance employees' skills and competencies. When institutions prioritize professional development, they demonstrate a commitment to their staff's growth, fostering a sense of value and belonging among faculty and staff (Gajanethi Swathi Kumari et al., 2025). Employee Engagement plays a critical role in this relationship. Engaged employees who participate in professional development programs are likely to experience increased job satisfaction and motivation. As their skills improve and they feel empowered, their commitment to the institution deepens, making them less inclined to seek alternative employment (Pujianto et al., 2025). Conversely, when professional development opportunities are limited or undervalued, employees may become disengaged, leading to higher turnover rates (Poku et al., 2025). Moreover, a culture of continuous learning not only enhances employee capabilities but also cultivates loyalty and a sense of community within the institution (Nguyen et al., 2025) Mohamad. By actively investing in the professional growth of their staff, higher education institutions can strengthen employee engagement, resulting in improved retention rates (Chopra et al., 2024; Sharif et al., 2024). Ultimately, focusing on professional development creates a positive feedback loop, reinforcing employee commitment and contributing to the institution's overall success. Thus, the following hypotheses were proposed for this study:

H4: There is a relationship between professional development opportunities and employee engagement toward employee retention in private higher education institutions.

H5: There is a relationship between professional development opportunities and employee retention in private higher education institutions.

H6: There is a relationship between employee engagement and employee retention in private higher education institutions.

H7: There is a mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between professional development opportunities and employee retention in private higher education institutions.

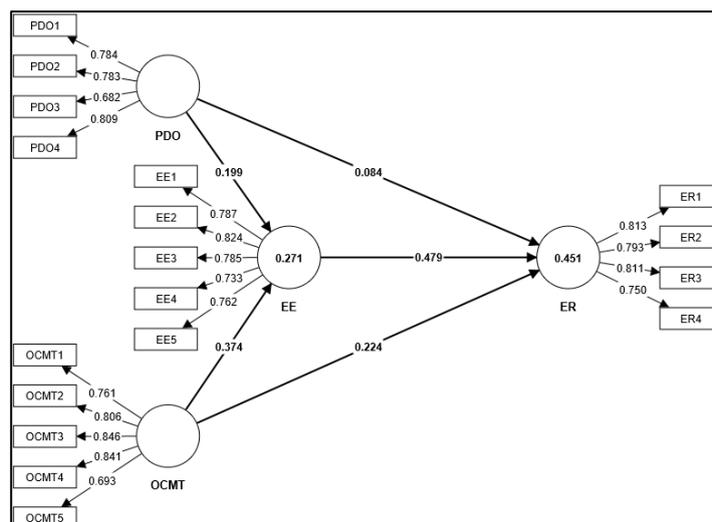


Figure 1: Research Model

Note: PDO=Professional Development Opportunities OCMT=Organizational Commitment
EE=Employee Engagement ER=Employee Retention

Methodology

This research explored the intricate relationships among professional development opportunities, organizational commitment, work-life balance, and employee retention in private higher education institutions, emphasizing the mediating function of employee engagement. A comprehensive data collection approach was utilized to guarantee the reliability and validity of the measurements. Survey tools were carefully chosen based on prior research. The researchers developed a questionnaire that included 18 observed variables: the independent variables, professional development opportunities (4 items) adapted from Noe (2010), and organizational commitment (5 items) sourced from Meyer & Allen (1991). The mediating variable, employee engagement (5 items), was derived from Saks (2006), while the dependent variable, employee retention (4 items), was based on the work of Hom & Griffeth (1995). Participants evaluated each construct on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Due to the absence of a complete population list, a purposive sampling technique was employed. Out of the 410 distributed surveys, 322 responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 78.5%, which justified the use of structural equation modeling (SEM) for analysis. After data cleaning, 311 responses were considered adequate for analysis. The research employed SmartPLS software, recognized for its SEM capabilities, to analyze and test the hypotheses, thanks to its robust evaluation features and ability to manage multivariate data, consistent with the study's aims and the recommendations by Ringle et al. (2022). SmartPLS enabled a thorough assessment of the proposed hypotheses and performed extensive multivariate data analysis, facilitating a comprehensive examination of both measurement and structural models.

Data Analysis

Respondents' Profiles

The demographic information of the study participants provides a detailed overview of their composition. In terms of gender distribution, the study involved 188 males, comprising 60.5% of the total, and 123 females, accounting for 39.5%. This shows a higher representation of males in the participant pool. Regarding age, the breakdown is as follows: individuals under 30 years old constitute 8.0% with 25 participants; those aged 31 to 40 make up 23.2% with 73

participants; the 41 to 50 age group is the largest, representing 40.2% with 125 participants; individuals aged 51 to 60 account for 19.9% with 62 participants, while those over 60 years old make up 8.7% with 27 participants. This distribution indicates a diverse age range among participants, with a significant proportion in the prime working age group of 41 to 50 years. Examining years of service, participants with less than 5 years make up 5.8% (18 individuals), those with 6 to 10 years account for 13.8% (43 individuals), and 11 to 15 years is the most represented category with 29.9% (93 individuals). Those with 16 to 20 years constitute 16.7% (52 individuals), while 21 to 25 years account for 12.5% (39 individuals). The groups with 26 to 30 years and over 30 years of service represent 4.8% (15 individuals) and 16.4% (51 individuals), respectively. Regarding their professional roles, 176 participants, or 56.6%, are academicians, while 135, or 43.4%, are non-academicians.

Common Method Bias

Analyzing the findings presented in Table 1 using the criteria outlined by Kock & Lynn (2012) and Kock (2015) helps to assess the presence of common method bias (CMB) in the study. Common method bias can potentially distort the relationships between constructs when data is collected from a single source. The Full Collinearity approach provides insights into the extent of CMB by examining variance inflation factors (VIF). In this analysis, the VIF values for all constructs range from 1.276 to 1.757, which are below the recommended threshold of 3.3. This indicates that common method bias is not a significant concern in this study. Each variable shows acceptable levels of collinearity, suggesting that the relationships among Employee Retention, Professional Development Opportunities, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Engagement are valid and reliable.

Table 1

Full Collinearity

	ER	PDO	OCMT	EE
ER		1.757	1.701	1.358
PDO	1.620		1.276	1.612
OCMT	1.731	1.409		1.753
EE	1.347	1.734	1.708	

Measurement Model

The analysis of construct reliability and validity based on the metrics presented in Table 2 reveals robust psychometric properties for the constructs assessed in this study, as suggested by Hair et al. (2019). The Cronbach Alpha (CA) values indicate acceptable levels of internal consistency across the constructs. Employee Engagement demonstrates a CA of 0.838, while Employee Retention and Organizational Commitment show CAs of 0.803 and 0.851, respectively, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. This suggests that the items within each construct consistently measure the intended concepts. Composite Reliability (CR) further supports these findings, with values of 0.841 for Employee Engagement, 0.811 for Employee Retention, and 0.874 for Organizational Commitment, signifying that the constructs hold strong reliability estimates above the recommended value of 0.70. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values also indicate adequate convergent validity, with Employee Engagement, Employee Retention, and Organizational Commitment averaging 0.607, 0.627, and 0.627, respectively, all surpassing the acceptable benchmark of 0.50. In contrast, the Professional Development Opportunities construct presents a CA of 0.764 and a CR of 0.766,

which are slightly below the more stringent benchmarks, and an AVE of 0.587, indicating moderate reliability and validity. Additionally, item loadings for each construct are above 0.682, with the highest loading being 0.824 for Employee Engagement (EE2) and 0.846 for Organizational Commitment (OCMT3). These loadings demonstrate that the items contribute significantly to their respective constructs, reinforcing the overall construct validity. Collectively, the results suggest that the measurement model exhibits strong reliability and valid constructs, aligning with the guidelines established by Hair et al. (2019), thus providing confidence in the study's quantitative findings. The analysis of the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratios, as presented in Table 3, is crucial for assessing discriminant validity among constructs. The HTMT values for Employee Engagement (EE), Employee Retention (ER), Organizational Commitment (OCMT), and Professional Development Opportunities (PDO) are below the threshold of 0.85 recommended by Henseler et al. (2015), indicating adequate discriminant validity. Specifically, the ratios, such as 0.753 (ER to EE) and 0.748 (OCMT to PDO), suggest that the constructs are distinct from one another, thereby reinforcing the measurement model's validity.

Table 2

Construct Reliability and Validity & Items Loadings

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Employee Engagement	EE1	0.787	0.838	0.841	0.607
	EE2	0.824			
	EE3	0.785			
	EE4	0.733			
	EE5	0.762			
Employee Retention	ER1	0.813	0.803	0.811	0.627
	ER2	0.793			
	ER3	0.811			
	ER4	0.750			
Organizational Commitment	OCMT1	0.761	0.851	0.874	0.627
	OCMT2	0.806			
	OCMT3	0.846			
	OCMT4	0.841			
	OCMT5	0.693			
Professional Development Opportunities	PDO1	0.784	0.764	0.766	0.587
	PDO2	0.783			
	PDO3	0.682			
	PDO4	0.809			

Notes: CA=Cronbach Alpha CR=Composite Reliability AVE=Average Variance Extracted

Table 3

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratios

	EE	ER	OCMT
ER	0.753		
OCMT	0.569	0.596	
PDO	0.526	0.534	0.748

Structural Model

This study assessed the structural model using the methodology described by Hair et al. (2017), emphasizing pathway coefficients (β) and coefficients of determination (R^2). Employing a Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, the analysis included 5,000 sub-samples to evaluate the significance of the path coefficients. The results of the hypothesis testing, presented in Table 4, encompass beta coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values, which offer valuable insights into the strength and significance of the relationships among the variables. This methodological rigor enhances the robustness of the study's findings by providing a comprehensive understanding of the interactions among the variables under investigation. The outcomes from the hypothesis testing, as outlined in Table 4, reveal significant insights regarding the relationships among professional development opportunities (PDO), employee engagement (EE), organizational commitment (OCMT), and employee retention (ER). The analysis of the hypotheses testing results, as shown in Table 4, reveals significant insights into the relationships among the constructs. *Hypothesis 1 (H1)*, which posits that Organizational Commitment (OCMT) positively influences Employee Engagement (EE), demonstrates a strong effect with a beta of 0.374, a t-statistic of 6.114, and a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value is well below the significance threshold of 0.05, H1 is accepted. Similarly, *Hypothesis 2 (H2)* asserts that OCMT has a positive impact on Employee Retention (ER), yielding a beta of 0.224 and a t-statistic of 3.669, with a p-value of 0.000; thus, H2 is also accepted. *Hypothesis 3 (H3)* explores the mediating effect of EE between OCMT and ER, with a beta of 0.179, t-statistic of 4.825, and p-value of 0.000, resulting in H3 being accepted. *Hypothesis 4 (H4)* states that Professional Development Opportunities (PDO) positively affect EE, revealing a beta of 0.199 and a t-statistic of 3.174, with a significant p-value of 0.002; therefore, H4 is accepted. In contrast, *Hypothesis 5 (H5)* posits that PDO has a direct influence on ER but presents a beta of only 0.084, a t-statistic of 1.351, and a p-value of 0.177, leading to the rejection of H5 due to its non-significant p-value. *Hypothesis 6 (H6)* indicates that EE positively affects ER, showcasing a strong beta of 0.479 and a notably high t-statistic of 8.983, with a p-value of 0.000; thus, H6 is accepted. Lastly, *Hypothesis 7 (H7)* examines the mediating role of EE between PDO and ER and shows a beta of 0.095, a t-statistic of 2.948, and a p-value of 0.003, resulting in the acceptance of H7. Overall, these results provide robust support for the proposed relationships in the model, with significant implications for understanding the dynamics between organizational commitment, professional development, employee engagement, and retention.

Table 4

Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypotheses	Beta	T statistics	P values	2.50%	97.50%	Decision
<i>H1: OCMT -> EE</i>	0.374	6.114	0.000	0.248	0.487	<i>Accepted</i>
<i>H2: OCMT -> ER</i>	0.224	3.669	0.000	0.105	0.343	<i>Accepted</i>
<i>H3: OCMT -> EE -> ER</i>	0.179	4.825	0.000	0.110	0.254	<i>Accepted</i>
<i>H4: PDO -> EE</i>	0.199	3.174	0.002	0.069	0.314	<i>Accepted</i>
<i>H5: PDO -> ER</i>	0.084	1.351	0.177	-0.036	0.206	<i>Rejected</i>
<i>H6: EE -> ER</i>	0.479	8.983	0.000	0.375	0.586	<i>Accepted</i>
<i>H7: PDO -> EE -> ER</i>	0.095	2.948	0.003	0.033	0.159	<i>Accepted</i>

Note: Significant $p < 0.05$

Effect Sizes (f^2)

According to Cohen's (1992) guidelines, effect sizes (f^2) are categorized as small (0.02), medium (0.15), and large (0.35). In Table 5, the effect size of Employee Engagement (EE) on Employee Retention (ER) is 0.305, indicating a medium to large impact. Organizational Commitment (OCMT) shows an effect size of 0.119 on EE and 0.051 on ER, reflecting small to medium effects. Professional Development Opportunities (PDO) have smaller effects, with 0.034 on EE and 0.008 on ER, indicating minimal impact. These results highlight the varying influence of each variable on the outcomes within the model.

Table 5

Effect Sizes (f^2)

	EE	ER
EE		0.305
OCMT	0.119	0.051
PDO	0.034	0.008

PLSpredict & Cross-Validated Predictive Ability Test (CVPAT)

According to Shmueli et al. (2016, 2019), PLSpredict evaluates the predictive performance of PLS-SEM models. In Table 6, the Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) values from PLS-SEM predictions are smaller than those from Linear Model (LM) predictions across all items. Specifically, all nine RMSE values for PLS are less than their corresponding LM RMSE values, indicating superior predictive accuracy. The negative PLS-LM difference values further confirm that PLS offers better predictions in this context. These results validate the predictive power of PLS-SEM models, highlighting their effectiveness for forecasting outcomes in comparison to traditional linear models. The Cross-Validated Predictive Ability Test (CVPAT) evaluates the predictive performance of a model, as highlighted by Hair et al. (2022) and Lienggaard et al. (2021). Table 7 reveals significant average loss differences for both Employee Engagement (EE) and Employee Retention (ER), at -0.077 and -0.089, respectively, indicating that the model consistently outperforms the baseline. The t-values of 3.821 for EE and 4.392 for ER, along with p-values of 0.000 for both constructs, confirm the robustness of the model's predictive ability. The overall average loss difference of -0.083 further emphasizes the model's effective predictive capability across variables.

Table 6

PLSpredict

	Q ² predict	PLS-RMSE	LM-RMSE	PLS-LM
EE1	0.199	0.641	0.642	-0.001
EE2	0.171	0.636	0.643	-0.007
EE3	0.109	0.688	0.695	-0.007
EE4	0.127	0.702	0.715	-0.013
EE5	0.151	0.635	0.640	-0.005
ER1	0.236	0.640	0.646	-0.006
ER2	0.171	0.636	0.647	-0.011
ER3	0.184	0.697	0.699	-0.002
ER4	0.062	0.761	0.764	-0.003

Table 7

Cross-Validated Predictive Ability Test (CVPAT)

	Average loss difference	t-value	p-value
EE	-0.077	3.821	0.000
ER	-0.089	4.392	0.000
Overall	-0.083	4.693	0.000

Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)

Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) provides insight into the effectiveness of various constructs by evaluating their importance and performance levels, as highlighted by Ringle and Sarstedt (2016) and Hair et al. (2018). In Table 8, Employee Engagement (EE) shows the highest importance (0.479) but has a moderate performance score of 60.824. Organizational Commitment (OCMT) has a commendable performance score (66.471) with slightly lower importance (0.403). Notably, Professional Development Opportunities (PDO) present the lowest importance (0.179) along with a performance score of 66.628. To enhance PDO's influence on employee retention, organizations should implement targeted strategies such as providing tailored professional development programs that focus on employees' skills and career goals. Encouraging transparent communication regarding career paths and offering mentorship opportunities could foster a culture of growth. Regularly soliciting employee feedback on development needs and actively addressing those can further enhance perceptions of PDO, leading to greater commitment and improved retention rates.

Table 8

Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)

	Importance	Performance
EE	0.479	60.824
OCMT	0.403	66.471
PDO	0.179	66.628

Discussion & Conclusion*Discussion*

To enhance employee retention in open, distance, and digital education (ODDE) higher education institutions, practical strategies that improve interaction with organizational commitment and professional development opportunities are essential. The study's findings highlight that Organizational Commitment (OCMT) significantly influences Employee Engagement (EE) with a beta of 0.374, indicating a strong positive relationship, and further affects Employee Retention (ER) with a beta of 0.224. Given these robust connections, institutions should focus on fostering a culture of commitment through transparent communication, recognition programs, and participatory decision-making processes, which can enhance employees' emotional attachment and motivation (Gajanethi Swathi Kumari et al., 2025). Moreover, with professional development showing potential impact on EE (beta of 0.199), it is crucial to create tailored training opportunities that align employees' skills with institutional goals, thereby enhancing both engagement and retention (Pujianto et al., 2025). Additionally, mentoring and coaching programs can address individual career aspirations, allowing employees to see a clear pathway of professional growth within the institution, which might mitigate disengagement, a noted issue in digital learning environments. The study also revealed that Professional Development Opportunities (PDO) had the lowest

importance and performance, with a beta of only 0.179, significantly affecting its role in mediating employee loyalty and retention. To counter this, institutions should implement continuous feedback mechanisms, ensuring that professional development aligns closely with employee needs and organizational objectives (Chopra et al., 2024). Furthermore, the lack of a significant effect of PDO on ER, indicated by a beta of 0.084 and a p-value of 0.177, suggests that while employees may recognize the value of development opportunities, they may not perceive them as directly tied to retention. This disconnect could stem from insufficient awareness of available development paths or inadequate support from management (Nurbaya & Kristanto, 2025). Institutions must communicate effectively about professional development offerings and encourage participation to bridge this gap. Overall, adopting these strategies can facilitate enhanced employee engagement, thereby reinforcing organizational commitment and ultimately driving retention in ODDE contexts. By fostering an environment that prioritizes meaningful interactions around commitment and development, institutions can ensure sustained workforce stability and quality in educational delivery.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications of this study extend the existing framework of employee retention within the context of open, distance, and digital education (ODDE) institutions by integrating elements of Social Exchange Theory and the importance-performance model. The findings reveal significant relationships between Organizational Commitment (OCMT), Employee Engagement (EE), and Employee Retention (ER), contributing to the understanding of how emotional attachment and perceived investment can influence employee behaviors in educational settings. The study's results highlight the mediating role of EE, suggesting that when organizations demonstrate commitment through professional development opportunities (PDO), it positively impacts employee engagement, which in turn enhances retention rates. This insight aligns with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that reciprocal relationships fostered by perceived organizational support contribute to employee loyalty and retention (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Furthermore, the research identifies the critical need for ODDE institutions to refine their approach to professional development offerings, suggesting that an alignment between employee needs and organizational goals fosters stronger engagement and commitment. This finding introduces a new concept of "interactive professional development," indicating that such initiatives should not only target skills enhancement but also consider employee aspirations and institutional values for more effective engagement. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of communication and feedback mechanisms in enhancing perceived support, which contributes to the broader understanding of how institutional culture influences retention. By highlighting the differences in effect sizes and performance levels, this research also enriches the empirical foundation of the importance-performance model, offering a nuanced view of how different constructs interact within the employee retention framework. Collectively, these insights contribute to refining theoretical understanding within the domains of human resource management and organizational behavior, prompting future research to explore further the dynamics within ODDE environments and the implications of interactive approaches to professional development.

Managerial Implications

The study's findings yield several important managerial implications for open, distance, and digital education (ODDE) institutions. First, the strong positive relationship between

Organizational Commitment (OCMT) and Employee Engagement (EE) underscores the need for managers to cultivate a supportive organizational culture. This can be achieved by fostering open communication, recognizing employees' contributions, and involving them in decision-making processes, which enhances their emotional connection to the institution. Furthermore, the significant impact of Professional Development Opportunities (PDO) on employee engagement suggests that institutions should invest in tailored training programs that align with both organizational objectives and individual career aspirations. Providing continuous learning and development initiatives can not only boost engagement but also enhance employees' skills, making them more effective in their roles. Managers should consider implementing mentorship programs that guide employees along their career paths, thereby reinforcing their commitment to the organization. Additionally, the findings indicate a need for robust feedback mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of professional development offerings and employee satisfaction. Regular surveys and focus groups can provide insights into employees' evolving needs and perceptions, enabling managers to adapt strategies accordingly. Ultimately, fostering an environment that prioritizes engagement and professional growth will contribute to improved employee retention. By recognizing the intricate relationship between these factors, managers can create a more motivated workforce, enhancing overall institutional performance and stability.

Suggestions for Future Studies

Future studies should explore several avenues to build upon the findings of this research. Firstly, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how the relationships between organizational commitment, employee engagement, and employee retention evolve, particularly in the dynamic context of open, distance, and digital education. Additionally, researchers could examine the impact of cultural differences on these relationships across various geographical locations to identify best practices tailored to specific contexts. Moreover, investigating the role of technology in facilitating professional development opportunities could yield valuable insights, especially in digital education environments. Examining how different delivery methods affect engagement and retention would enhance understanding. Finally, qualitative studies, such as interviews and focus groups, could delve deeper into employee perspectives regarding professional development and engagement strategies, providing rich insights that quantitative measures may overlook. This holistic approach would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of employee dynamics in ODDE institutions.

Conclusion

This study underscores the critical interrelationships between Organizational Commitment (OCMT), Employee Engagement (EE), and Employee Retention (ER) within open, distance, and digital education (ODDE) institutions. The findings reveal that fostering a supportive organizational culture and providing tailored Professional Development Opportunities (PDO) are essential for enhancing employee engagement, which ultimately leads to improved retention rates. The mediating role of employee engagement emphasizes the importance of continuous investment in employee development and the necessity for transparent communication. Additionally, the study highlights the need for institutions to adapt strategies to meet evolving employee needs, ensuring alignment with both individual aspirations and organizational goals. By implementing these practical recommendations, managers can create a more engaged and committed workforce, contributing to the overall success and

stability of ODDE institutions. Future research avenues identified in this study will further enrich the understanding of these dynamics, ultimately paving the way for enhanced employee experiences in educational settings.

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