

# The Moderating effect of Perceived Support in the Link among Work Engagement and Turnover Intention: Evidence from Nigeria

Paul Dung Gadi<sup>1</sup>, Daisy Mui Hung Kee<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>*School Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia*

*Email: jsstature@gmail.com*

**Abstract:** *The purpose of this research is to test the moderating effect of perceived support in the link connecting work engagement and turnover intention. A set of 360 surveys was given out to academics in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria and SmartPLS to test the hypotheses. The results verified the effect of supervisor support moderates the effect of work engagement on turnover intention whereas organizational support was not supported. Therefore, to validate the findings, a longitudinal study is required. Future studies should aim to consist of public/private higher institutions of learning in Nigerian. This study supports evidence for supervisors intervening effect on the link connecting work engagement and turnover intention in higher institutions of learning in the country. This paper provides theoretical evidence and a managerial base for potential scholars since Nigeria lacks investigations on moderating impact on distinctive effects.*

**Keywords** *Perceived organizational support; Perceived supervisor support; PLS-SEM; Work Engagement, Turnover Intention*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

An increasing body of literature commends the advantages of an engaged workforce. The current study uncovered that work engagement is positively correlated to the individual commitment and work fulfillment (Oosthuizen, Coetzee, & Munro, 2016; Yalabik, Rayton, & Rapti, 2017; Karanika-murray, Duncan, Pontes, & Griffiths, 2016; e.g., Airila et al., 2014; Saks, 2006), job performance (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Rhenen, 2009) and workability (Rafiq, Wu, Chin, & Nasir, 2019), and positively linked to employees retention (Schaufeli et al., 2009), abnormal conduct (Alfes, Shantz, Truss, & Soane, 2013; Agarwal & Gupta, 2016; Clercq & Bouckenoghe, 2014) and turnover intention (Oruh et al., 2019). Given these outcomes, scholars have suggested the need to concentrating on avenues to enhance worker work engagement (Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2019). Study to unearth the assumptions of engagement, the likelihood that the correlation linking engagement and turnover intention changes as an act of a moderating construct needs to be researched in the Nigerian context. As Parker & Griffin (2011) suggested that a decrease in work engagement does not automatically suggest likewise decrease in anticipated higher turnover intention. The reason attributed to this is alternative support in the workplace can moderate the outcomes of lower levels of engagement.

The paper first identifies the potential moderators regarding the correlation linking work engagement and turnover intention. However, some investigations have studied the interactions linking performance feedback and personal-related issues as precursors of work engagement (Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008; Airila et al., 2014), Presently, no research have explored a boundary precondition of the association between engagement and turnover

intention in developing country like Nigeria (Chika, Irene, Joseph, & Ayooluwa, 2016). Colquitt & Zapata-phelan (2007), suggested a theory that explains the circumstances which support the hypothesized link. Therefore, studying perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support as the likely moderators enriches engagement assumption by discovering circumstances over which the correlation linking engagement and the owned consequence is reduced or strengthened. Besides, evaluating an establishment moderator, such as perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support, is additionally a practical contribution regulating the link connecting work engagement and employee turnover behavior. Hence, the article proposes that perceived organizational support may act like a moderator; therefore, universities may lower the tendency that academicians that are somewhat disengaged with their job will show extreme turnover intention.

Build on the job demand resource (JD-R) theory, Hu and Schaufeli (2017) proposed certain work resources for example POS are work resources with encouraging potentials that may bring emotional stability and self-efficacy amongst academicians. Therefore, job resources that support realizing job objectives, inspire individual development, decrease job demands, and turnover intention such as PSS and POS are examined as per the moderators linking work engagement and turnover intention. In short, this research use JD-R theory to strengthen the conceptual model of the research by testing the relationships linking the exogenous variable and turnover intention jointly with the moderating role of PSS and POS.

The research also adds to the engagement concept by putting work engagement as a personal resource, a job resource that is substitutable with alternative resources (Bhatti, Mat, & Juhari, 2018; Agarwal & Gupta, 2018). Although prior studies have utilized the theory of cognitive appraisal to work engagement model (van Woerkom, Bakker, & Nishii, 2016; Bakker, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Sanz Vergel, 2016; Mazzetti, Vignoli, Schaufeli, & Guglielmi, 2017), the above-mentioned investigations have postulated that work engagement is a result of work resources. Consistent with the extended JD-R theory, personal resources, job resources, and mainly supervisor support, and organizational support can strengthen workers' engagement by rising their intrinsic desire (van Woerkom et al., 2016; Bakker, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Sanz Vergel, 2016). This can be achieved by promoting employees' growth and development plus extrinsic desire, such as providing helpful support to workers to assist them in reaching their professional objectives. Nevertheless, Siu, Bakker, and Jiang (2013) recommended that besides strengthening individuals' intrinsic hobby in their job, perceived organizational support/perceived supervisor support would augment for engagement. Equally, perceived organizational support would augment workers' interests for their jobs (Kurtessis et al., 2015). Additionally, another study Wan and Saidin (2018) established that POS and PSS bear a significant influence on work engagement that, sequentially, run to further OCBs and more productive performances at the job. Thus, the current study applies the JDR model to conceiving perceived organizational support as a job resource that is important in inspiring ability that can bring a positive belief and behavior among workers. Using the JDR model, the present study proposes that employees who have job resources of PSS and POS are further expected to exhibit extreme work engagement and are less expected to quit their organization. Therefore, PSS and POS will buffer the connection linking work engagement and turnover intention.

Next, the article adds that the researches explore the correlation linking engagement and turnover intention. A review reveals that there are significantly some empirical researches that have studied the correlation linking engagement and turnover intention, concerning job crafting, good quality social relations, and secure attachment (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Agarwal & Gupta, 2018). While the findings of these analyses review undoubtedly

establish the correlation linking engagement and proactive behavior and outcomes, it is necessary for study on the degree to which engagement precedes a fewer desirable outcome for universities, for example, turnover intention. Furthermore, inadequate investigations that have researched the link connecting work engagement and turnover intention. Thus, the current paper expands to the turnover studies by improving the external validity of previous studies which have put engagement as a determining factor of this outcome.

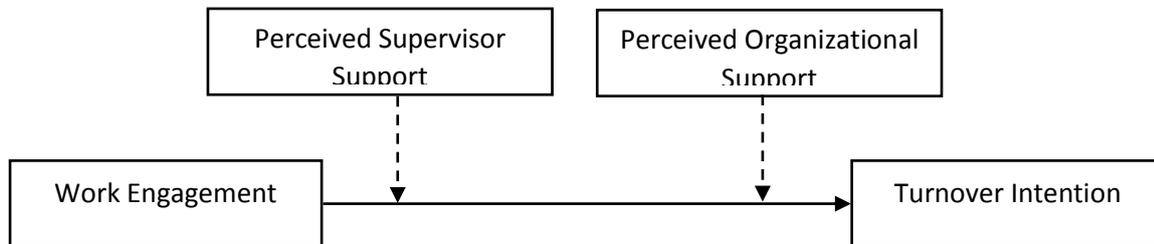


Fig. 1 conceptual Framework

## 2. METHODOLOGY/MATERIAL

### 2.1 Participants and Procedure

This study focused on six selected top public universities (one) from each Geo-political zone of Nigeria. The present study collected data from April- September 2019 from individual academicians working in the top three public universities in north-central Nigeria. Academicians of the universities were requested to partake in voluntary and unnamed in the research. The present utilized a purposive sampling procedure. The sampling technique is confined to academicians who can provide the desired information for this present study.

All academicians were provided a particular period to finish the questionnaires at the workplace, and they were solicited to send them precisely to the HR department. For the study, academicians measured their PSS/POS and their degree of work engagement, according to the instruments defined below. Out of 781 samples of academicians, 400 surveys were fulfilled, establishing a reply rate of 46.11%.

Of the resulting sample, the majority were male 78.5%, married were more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the sample 86.3%. Their tenure with these universities was the majority of the academicians had worked between 6 to 15 years 68.5%. The sample consisted of academicians in three public universities in Nigeria across the north-central, University of Jos (46.39%), University of Ilorin (28.1%), and University of Markudi (25.6%).

### 2.2 Measures

The current study adopted a short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. All dimensions of work engagement, viz., absorption, dedication, and vigor were measured as the unit dimension with a 7-point Likert scale from 1 ("never") to 7 ("always") for every item (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006).

PSS and POS were assessed with a 9-item each to measure the perceived support received by the subordinates. A shortened version of POS developed by Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-lamastro (1990) was adapted to assess the PSS and POS. Academicians utilized a 7-Likert scale to rate how each question related to his or her university management (1-strongly

disagree to 7-strongly agree). Eisenberger et al. (1990)'s scale confirmed a reliability coefficient of 0.96.

The turnover intention was assessed with a 6-item scale, used by Bothma and Roodt (2013). Bothma and Roodt (2013)' scale confirmed high internal consistency reliability of 0.90. The individuals were asked to specify the degree of agreement/disagreement with the statements on a 5-Likert scale point: (1 – Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree).”

### 3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Gender	Female	77	21.5
	Male	283	78.5
	Total	360	100.0
Age	21-30 Years	12	3.3
	31-40 Years	107	29.8
	41-50 Years	212	59.0
	51-60 Years	16	4.5
	61 Years AND ABOVE	13	3.5
	Total	360	100.0
Marital Status	MARRIED	280	86.3
	SINGLE	41	12.5
	WIDOWED	39	1.3
	Total	360	100.0
Tenure with this Institution	1-5 Years	50	13.8
	11-15 Years	115	32.0
	16-20 Years	26	7.3
	21-25 Years	17	4.8
	26 Years AND ABOVE	21	5.8
	6-10 Years	131	36.5
	Total	360	100.0
Highest Qualification	Higher National Diploma	12	3.3
	Master's Degree	246	68.5
	Others (please specify)	4	1.3
	PhD	85	23.5
	Postgraduate Diploma	13	3.5
	Total	360	100.0
Institution	University of Jos	167	49.39
	University of Ilorin	101	28.1
	University of Markudi	92	25.6
	Total	360	100.0

#### 3.1 Assessment of structural model

This study used the SmartPLS 3.2.9 software for the statistical estimation of both the structural and measurement model components of the hypothesized framework. In PLS-SEM, the two-stage estimation of the outer and inner models is the standard for model assessment and relationship testing (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). Since the hypothesized model

is the reflective type, it was estimated grounded on validity and reliability in addition to path analysis, coefficient of determination, and effect size (Sarstedt et al., 2019).

### 3.2 Measurement Model

In assessing the reliability and the validity of the reflective model, the convergent validity, average variance estimate, and indicator loadings were the criteria. From Tab. 2, the PLS Algorithm results for outer loadings were between 0.782 - 0.884. All outer loadings of the variables were greater than the limit of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2017). Composite reliability estimates varied between 0.932 and 0.963, all higher than the 0.708 criteria (Hair et al., 2017). In fulfilling the average variance estimates criteria, all the values from the constructs were between 0.664 and 0.753, satisfying the standard minimum values of 0.501 (Hair et al., 2017). The estimates attained for the measurement model, validity and reliability measures were achieved. In assessing the structural model, the links and significance of path coefficients, coefficient of determination, t-statistics, mediation effects, and effect sizes were analyzed (Hair et al., 2017).

Tab. 2. Results of Measurement Model

Construct	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE	R <sub>2</sub>	F <sup>2</sup>
Perceived Organizational Support	POS2	0.851	0.932	0.664		0.148
	POS3	0.844				
	POS4	0.804				
	POS5	0.782				
	POS6	0.791				
	POS8	0.815				
	POS9	0.812				
Perceived Supervisor Support	PSS1	0.862	0.965	0.753		0.444
	PSS2	0.851				
	PSS3	0.852				
	PSS4	0.847				
	PSS5	0.872				
	PSS6	0.880				
	PSS7	0.865				
	PSS8	0.894				
	PSS9	0.887				
Turnover Intention	TI1	0.848	0.935	0.704	0.825	
	TI2	0.84				
	TI3	0.852				
	TI4	0.837				
	TI5	0.855				
	TI6	0.802				
	Work Engagement	WE1				
WE2		0.853				
WE3		0.871				
WE4		0.868				
WE5		0.865				
WE6		0.884				

	WE7	0.876				
	WE8	0.849				
	WE9	0.848				

Discriminant validity Constructs in a model have to differ in terms of measurement from other variables. Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommend the correlation of variables to be assessed with the square root of the average variance estimate for a specific variable. Thus, the diagonal loadings have to be greater than their corresponding vertical loadings for other constructs. Table 3 depicts all bolded diagonal loadings being higher than their vertical counterparts. Indicators in the variables within the model assessed discriminately, achieving the threshold.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity of Constructs

	POS	PSS	TI	WE
POS	<b>0.815</b>			
PSS	0.805	<b>0.868</b>		
TI	-0.827	-0.877	<b>0.839</b>	
WE	0.683	0.716	-0.749	<b>0.863</b>

Diagonals in bold represent the square of the average variance extracted (AVE), and the other values represent the correlations

Perceived Organizational Support = POS; Perceived Supervisor Support = PSS; Turnover Intention=TI; Work Engagement = WE

### 3.3 Path analysis and hypotheses testing

For path analysis, a bootstrapping procedure of 1000 samples was used to correct for non-normality and calculate the significance of model hypotheses. The graphical findings of the bootstrapping testing are given in Fig. 2.

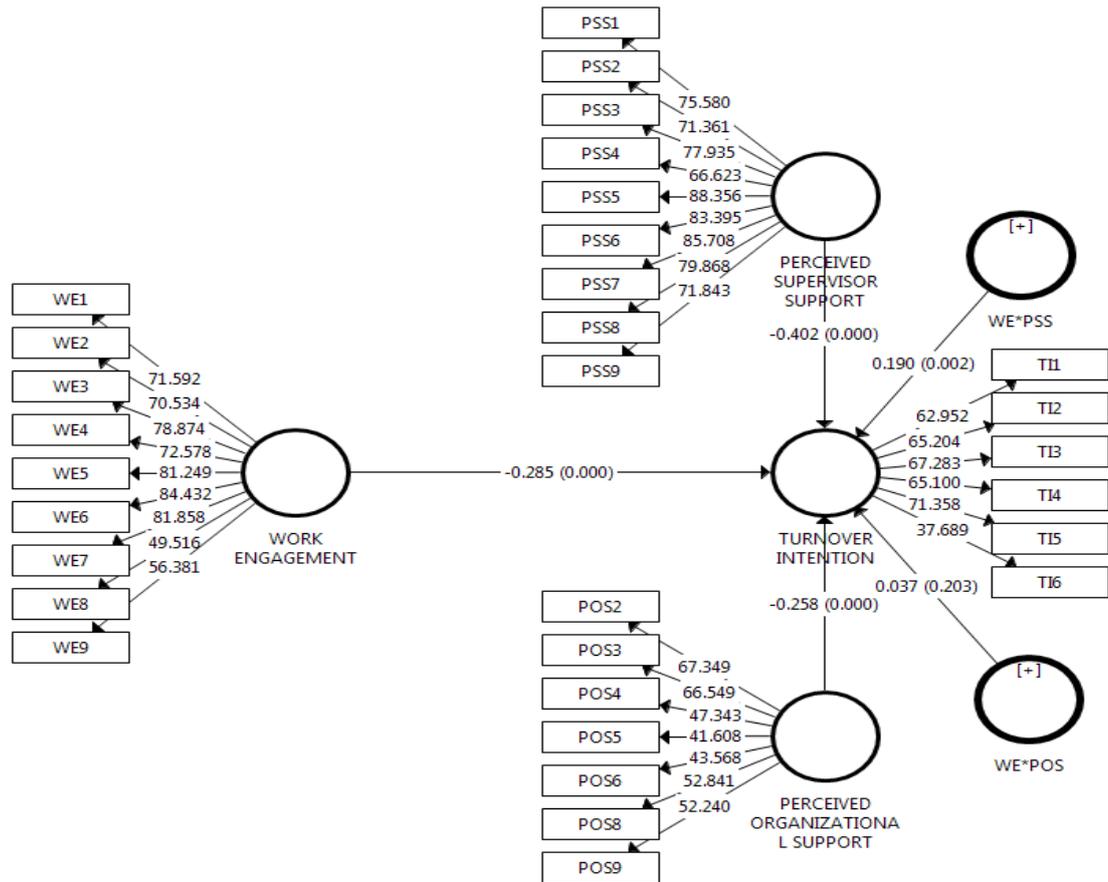


Figure 2: Results from the PLS-SEM (1000) bootstrapping

The tabulated findings, as of the bootstrapping procedure, are exhibited in Tab. 5. In Tab. 5, the initial assessment was the determinant of turnover intention. From the table, the beta coefficient and t-statistic indicated that the construct, work engagement ( $\beta = -0.285$ ;  $t = 5.548$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) had a negative link with turnover intention respectively and was significant in prediction.

Hypothesis 2 specified that there is a relation linking engagement and turnover intention and that PSS offsets for low degrees of engagement. The findings, presented in Tab. 3, discovered that the relationship was supported. Hence, a simple slopes assessment was examined. The findings revealed that the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention was moderated by perceived supervisor support ( $\beta = -0.190$ ,  $t=2.848$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, the second hypothesis was supported.

The third hypothesis specified the relationship linking engagement and turnover intention and that POS offsets for depleted degrees of engagement. Also, the findings, presented in Tab.3, discovered that the moderation was not supported. Hence, we did not perform a simple slopes analysis. The findings revealed that perceived organizational support did not moderate the link between work engagement and turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.037$ ,  $t=0.833$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, the third hypothesis was not supported.

Table 4: Path analysis structural model results.

Direct/indirect effect	beta	St, error	t. value	Decision
Work Engagement -> Turnover Intention	-0.401	0.041	9.727***	Supported
POS*WE -> Turnover Intention	0.037	0.044	0.203	Not Supported

PSS*WE -> Turnover Intention	0.190	0.067	2.848***	Supported
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Note: \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01

The plots for the significant interactions are shown in Figures 3

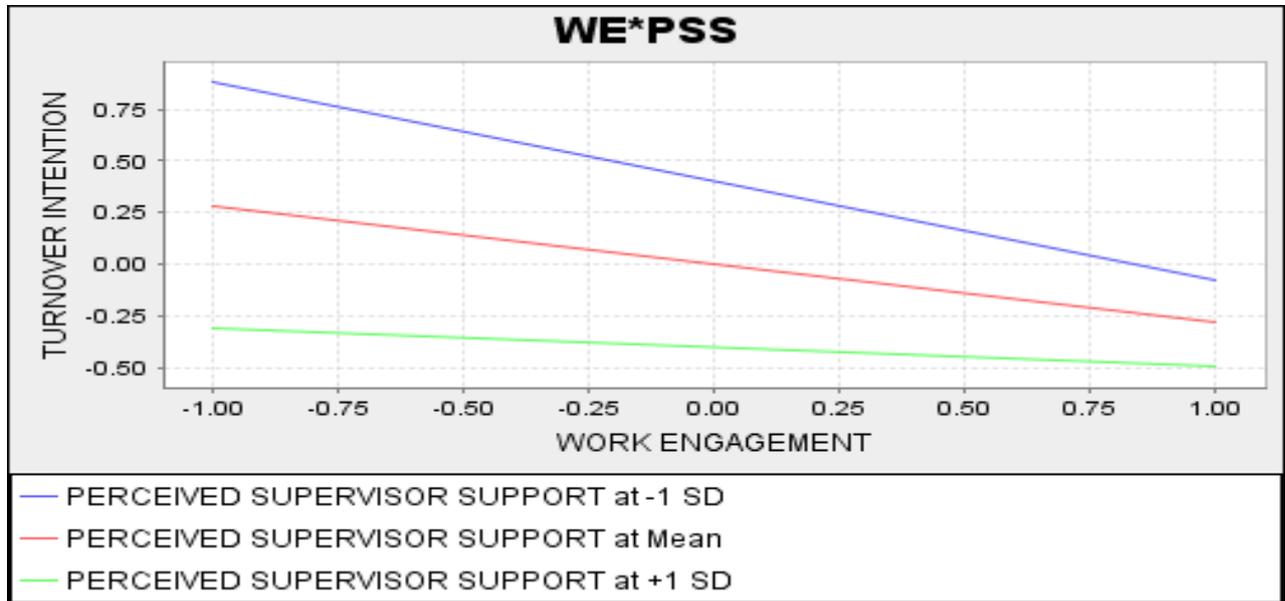


Figure 3: The plot the interaction

The significant result emerging from the data is PSS has to influence in that it exerts a moderating effect on the direct effect relationships ( $\beta = -0.190$ ,  $t=2.848$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Equally presented in Fig. 3, significant findings supported H2 in that POS moderated the negative link among work engagement and turnover intention, as the association was strengthened when PSS was high. However, the result emerging from POS was surprisingly not significant in that it did not exerts a moderating effect on the direct relation ( $\beta = -0.037$ ,  $t=0.833$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). It implies that by applying PSS and POS to increase academicians' amount of engagement, the negative outcomes of work engagement on turnover intention are only buffered by PSS alone effectively. The different slopes between low-high perceived supervisor support clearly show an extreme correlation linking work engagement and turnover intention for high rather than low levels of perceived supervisor support.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The findings from the current investigation state that PSS repays for low degrees of work engagement while POS did not. Individuals that were disengaged were unlikely to demonstrate the intention to quit the university than individuals that were engaged if they recognized that their workplace was caring. Likewise, a depleted degree of work engagement was linked with an extreme degree of turnover intention when those academicians did not acknowledge that their university valued them.

Even though PSS and POS are key variables in SET, the current study agrees with some surveys which have hypothesized POS and PSS as a significant means that could strengthen the negative outcomes of job-related feelings and conditions (e.g. Witt & Carlson, 2006). The conceptual framework applied in the current study is applicable in that SET implies that at low degrees of engagement are correlated with employees' negative consequences; SET.

The findings of the study enhance the knowledge on turnover intention. Though a review has confirmed a negative correlation among work engagement and a significant turnover

intention and limited investigations that have studied the correlation linking work engagement and turnover intention (Christian et al., 2011; Gadi & Kee, 2018).

#### *4.1 Practical Implications*

The results, as of the current paper, indicate a direct link connecting work engagement and turnover intention. Therefore, university administrators and HR administrators are deeply recommended to examine engagement using employee surveys. HR managers and university administrators can gain from understanding different researches surveyed at various times and in several locations discover the consistent link connecting work engagement and turnover intention. The reason is that university administrators and HR administrators are frequently requested to exhibit the significance of HR practices on finding, for instance, turnover intention. Nevertheless, university administrators and HR administrators shouldn't concentrate only on work engagement values.

Academicians that are relatively disengaged with their job may likely exhibit lower turnover intention if academicians believe the university supports them. University administrators ought to, as a result, seize opportunities to confirm there is an encouraging workplace since this is an efficient technique of finding moderately disengaged academicians to sustain positive behaviors regarding their university.

HRM practices demonstrating an appreciation of academician involvements likely promote PSS and POS. For instance, academician recognition programs, reward recognition, promotions, career recognition, and training and development can be recognized as plans that the establishment values workers and appreciates concerning their welfare (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

#### *4.2 Directions for Future Research and Limitations*

The constraint of the current research is the gauge of turnover intention. Even though the academicians in the current study stated the level to which they had an intention to leave the present organization, and self-report data were equally used. Despite these constraints, the current research recommends an additional way of study in the engagement article by investigating the significance of a hypothetically drawn limit condition of the correlation linking lesser degrees of work engagement with turnover intention. Future studies should investigate other possible moderating constructs, with another variable, for example, the moderating role of the work environment, positive psychological capital, job-resources, and perceived supervisor support in the correlation linking work engagement and performance. Therefore, future studies should take into consideration extra-role behavior (Cohen & McKay, 1984). The concept maintains that cushion influences are expected to happen once there is a balance linking the suggested cushion and the results in the current research. Lastly, scholars can besides, desire to investigate if all workers might remain engaged with their job. It is logical to think that some employees are influenced to moderately lower or higher degrees of work commitment (Gadi & Kee, 2020) hence, there might be individuals that are influenced to lower or higher degrees of work engagement.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

The current research investigated a limited boundary of the correlation linking work engagement with turnover intention. The results from the study uncovered that even though a little degree of work engagement is certainly linked to an extreme degree of turnover intention, extreme altitudes of PSS buffer the link connecting work engagement and turnover intention. The current results propose that highlighting ways to enhance levels of work

engagement is a worthy and essential requirement for low turnover intention. University administrators and HR administrators should likewise concentrate on techniques to enhance perceived organizational support for university academicians; to experience.

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