

**Investigating the influence of job
embeddedness on turnover intention: The
mediational role of work engagement**

F Chingono

 **orcid.org 0000-0003-0021-1791**

Mini-dissertation accepted in
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree *Master of Business
Administration* at the North-West
University

Supervisor: Ms N Khumalo

DECLARATION

I, Farai Chingono, declare that this mini-dissertation titled “Investigating the influence of job embeddedness on turnover intention: The mediational role of work engagement” at a selected higher education institution in South Africa is my work. All sources used to support this study have been indicated and given full credit by means of a reference listing. Therefore, I confirm that I am the author of this dissertation, and it has not been submitted for a degree before.

Signature: F Chingono

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- I want to sincerely thank everyone who helped me finish this mini-dissertation. This journey has been both challenging and rewarding, and I am thankful for the support and guidance I have received along the way.
- I extend my appreciation to Dr Ntseliseng Khumalo, my supervisor, for her invaluable guidance and insightful feedback throughout the entire study.
- I am also grateful to my employer, North West University, for the opportunity to study my dream qualification and for sponsoring the tuition fees.
- A special thank you to my wife for her patience and encouragement. Having a newborn baby in the middle of my studies was manageable, thanks to her support and understanding.
- I would like to acknowledge my Statistician, Ms Elizabeth Bothma, for her assistance in interpreting and analysing the results of the study.
- To the participants who generously shared their time and insights, making this study possible, are highly appreciated.
- My deepest gratitude goes to the Almighty for making all this possible. I glorify His Holy name.
- This thesis is a culmination of the collective efforts of many, some I did not mention, from MBA team members, colleagues, family, and friends; you are all deeply appreciated.

ABSTRACT

South African higher education institutions find it increasingly difficult to retain staff (Barkhuizen et al., 2020). An educational institution, whose employees are their most valuable assets, would undoubtedly prefer to retain its staff to remain competitive. Researchers are moving their focus from why employees leave, and subsequently, there is a growing interest in why employees stay. As a result, there is an increased focus on determining whether the heightened embeddedness of staff and elevated levels of work engagement might be genuine strategies to reduce the intention to leave.

The purpose of this study was to find empirical evidence of the influence of job embeddedness on turnover intention and to explore intermediary work engagement, focusing predominantly on non-academic staff. The research studied and analysed the existing literature and other related research previously carried out that was related to the subject matter or job embeddedness, work engagement, and the intention to leave. Building on this foundation, the research methodology was developed, and the study was carried out. The study targeted non-academic employees of an educational institution that has three campuses across two South African provinces.

Using the mono-method that adopted a quantitative approach to conduct the survey, online questionnaires were used to gather information from the participants. The questionnaires' measurement instruments were the Job Embeddedness Scale (JES-9), Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) and Turnover Intention (TIS-3). The study expected responses from 273 people but ultimately received 102 respondents, representing a 37% response rate. The study conducted a descriptive statistical analysis and established that job embeddedness is significantly related to reducing turnover intention. Moreover, an elevated level of engagement at work was indirectly related to job embeddedness to reduce the turnover intention. These results concur with Takawira et al. (2014) and Khan et al.'s (2018) studies, which established that elevated levels of embeddedness and work engagement significantly reduced employees' intentions to consider leaving.

This study's results provide practical guidance for educational institutions and other organisations seeking to retain their employees by nurturing strong job embeddedness and boosting work engagement. The insights from this research further provide value to human resource management, organisational leaders, and researchers keen on understanding the factors influencing employee turnover in today's workforce.

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background	1
1.3 Statement of The Problem	3
1.4 Rationale And Significance Of The Study	4
1.4.1 Contribution to the literature on people management.....	4
1.4.2 Practical contribution to managers and policymakers.....	5
1.4.3 Industry Contribution	5
1.5 Aim And Objectives Of The Study	5
1.5.1 Main aim	5
1.5.2 Secondary objectives	6
1.6 Research Questions	6
1.7 Demarcation/Delimitation Of The Study	6
1.8 Inclusion-Exclusion Criteria	7
1.9 Definition of The Key Concepts	7
1.10 Ethical Considerations	8
1.10.1 Ethical Considerations.....	8
1.10.2 Informed Consent	8
1.10.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity	9
1.11 Limitations of Research	9
1.12 Study Overview	9
1.13 Chapter Summary	10
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Introduction	11

2.2 Job Embeddedness	12
2.3 Work Engagement	14
2.4 Turnover Intention.....	16
2.5 Relationship Between Job Embeddedness And Work Engagement.....	18
2.6 Relationship Between Work Engagement And Turnover Intention	21
2.7 Relationship Between Job Embeddedness And Turnover Intention.....	21
2.8 The Mediational Role Of Work Engagement.....	23
2.9 Theoretical Framework	24
2.9.1 The Job-Embeddedness Theory.....	24
2.9.2 Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory	25
2.10 Conclusion.....	26
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN.....	27
3.1 Introduction	27
3.2 Research Paradigm	27
3.3 Research Approach	28
3.4 Methodological Choice	29
3.5 Research Design.....	29
3.6 Time Horizon	30
3.7 Research Methodologies/Processes	30
3.7.1 Population.....	30
3.7.2 Sample Method/Technique and Sample Size	31
3.8 Data Collection Instruments.....	31
3.9 Measuring Instrument: Validity, Reliability, And Trustworthiness	33
3.10 Data Collection/Fieldwork.....	34
3.11 Power Relationships and Gatekeeper Intervention.....	35
3.12 Data Coding And Analysis.....	35
3.13 Study Limitations	36
3.14 Chapter Summary	37

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	38
4.1 Introduction	38
4.2 Response Rate	38
4.3 Biographical Information Presentation	39
4.4 Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Coefficients, and Correlations.....	40
4.4.1 Testing the measurement model	42
4.4.2 Testing the structural model	43
4.4.3 The indirect effect of job embeddedness	45
4.5 Discussion	45
4.6 Conclusions	48
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	49
5.1 Introduction	49
5.2 Conclusion of the Study	49
5.3 Managerial Implications.....	51
5.4 Limitations	52
5.5 Recommendations for Future Research	52
5.6 Chapter Summary	53
REFERENCES.....	55
APPENDICES.....	65
APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER.....	66
APPENDIX B: NWU GATEKEEPERS APPROVAL LETTER.....	68
APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM.....	70
APPENDIX D: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT	71
APPENDIX E: TURNITIN REPORT	74
APPENDIX F: LANGUAGE EDITOR’S LETTER	75

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Characteristics of the participants (n=102).....	40
Table 2: Descriptive statistics, reliability coefficients, and correlations	42
Table 3: Fit statistics of final and competing measurement models.	43
Table 4: Initial framework fit indices and standardised path coefficients.....	44
Table 5: Indirect effects through work engagement on turnover intention.	45

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: A model that illustrates potential relationships between variables.	23
--	----

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Institutions globally desire to maintain stability and retain their competitiveness through talent retention strategies. Focus on staff retention has gradually shifted from understanding why employees leave their organisations to what keeps employees with the same employer. This has given rise to the importance of embeddedness, commitment, and engagement at work in retaining talent and valuable individuals, and these factors are thought to provide firms with a competitive edge (Bakker et al., 2008; Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Mitchell et al., 2001b). This link suggests that employers can actively use facets of embeddedness and engagement at work as practical ways to reduce staff members' intention to leave to minimise employee turnover.

This chapter outlines the background of this research study and develops the related problem statement. The underlying purpose of the research was to investigate the influence of job embeddedness and work engagement on turnover intention (TI). This chapter clearly states the study's goals, the research questions, the significance of the research, its limitations, and the ethical issues considered.

1.2 Background

Globalisation and competitive pressures, among other things, negatively impact South Africa's higher education industry. Talent retention is a critical competitive advantage for these institutions. The primary business goals of an educational institution are, among other things, research and development, delivering modern quality learning experiences, and managing staff and students, all of which require talented human capital (Netswera et al., 2006). However, these institutions are increasingly susceptible to losing talented staff to well-paying competitors from both international institutions and the local private sector. Institutions lose not only key talented staff but also critical institutional knowledge.

It is essential to understand the facets that keep employees in their current employment. Recognising the aspects that retain workers in their current positions is vital to securing exceptional employees and retaining them in institutions of higher learning (Michaels et al.,

2001). Employees first develop an intention to leave, which acts as a driver to leave their place of employment eventually. In the quest to significantly reduce TI, several researchers have determined that embeddedness and work engagement actively reduce employees' intentions to leave (Du Plessis et al., 2015; Takawira et al., 2014). However, studies have yet to be conducted to test these hypotheses in support staff or non-academic employees at an institution of higher learning in South Africa.

According to Karatepe and Ngeche (2012), workers who intend to leave are typically poor performers and erode organisational competitiveness. This arises out of their feelings of detachment from the organisation's future, partly because they do not consider themselves to belong to that future, but also for many other reasons. Organisations have attempted to increase embeddedness in their environment to manage TI. In the case of an educational institution, its human resource objective is to retain experienced and talented staff and reduce recruitment expenses, training, and related retention failure expenses. Academics have traditionally favoured a high degree of job embeddedness as highly embedded staff are unlikely to leave their jobs voluntarily (Harman et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2004; Mitchell et al., 2001b). However, the embedded nature of the job does not affect employees' intentions. Staff turnover is such a complex issue that these two variables might not influence an employee's intention to leave.

According to Hom et al. (2020), employees' low work commitment and turnover are expensive, as they cause interruptions, obliterate organisational memory, and affect mentorship. Several tools and strategies have been employed to enhance work engagement in the form of job autonomy, project management tools, goal-tracking, and employee recognition models for achieved targets. These mechanisms have led to employees being more involved and committed in their work, as they believe that their career goals are in line with the organisational culture and job expectations. It was found that these employees showed less intention to leave and an increase in job performance. Against this background, researchers propose that work engagement indirectly influences TI through job embeddedness (Karatepe & Ngeche, 2012; Takawira et al., 2014).

Several scholars have noted that lower levels of job embeddedness significantly predict TI, diminish motivation, trust, commitment, and engagement, and result in unproductive workplace behaviours (Du Plessis et al., 2015, Mitchell et al., 2001b; Takawira et al., 2014). Understanding how job embeddedness strengthens or weakens TI can advance theoretical understanding and improve strategies relevant to managing TIs.

In this research, it was anticipated that employees with reduced job embeddedness would demonstrate a stronger inclination to leave their current positions since they would feel less embedded in the company. On the contrary, employees with heightened levels of job embeddedness were expected to exhibit a reduced desire for change due to excellent collegial relationships, fit with the job and environment that they might have to give up if a move was pursued.

It was reasonable to assume that work engagement might influence the intention to leave and job embeddedness, given previous studies that established relationships between embeddedness and the intention to leave. This assumption is supported by the argument that the more engaged workers are, the less likely they are to want to resign or leave the company because they experience increased engagement at work.

Against this background, it was necessary to investigate how embeddedness and work engagement affected the turnover behaviour of support staff members in an institution of higher education. More specifically, this study investigated the mediating role of work engagement on job embeddedness. It provides a better understanding of behaviours and the underlying facets that contribute to TI. In turn, this can inform and assist organisational strategies to reduce turnover. Although there have been several related studies, there was a need for recent studies to gain new understanding considering the ever-evolving workplace.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In South Africa, institutions of higher education are challenged to retain staff (Barkhuizen et al., 2020), which is not confined to academic staff but includes university support staff. Based on previous studies (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Mitchell et al., 2001b; Takawira et al., 2014), work engagement and job embeddedness are regarded as organisational strategies that retain talented employees by thwarting their intention to leave. However, most of these studies are foreign-based, and local studies are low and focus only on academic staff retention (Shibiti et al., 2018; Takawira et al., 2014), leaving a research vacuum in the context of support staff. An educational institution's employees are their most valuable assets, and they prefer to retain engaged embedded staff. In doing so, not only are they able to retain their employees, but they can remain competitive. It is imperative for any institution that aspires to maintain a competitive edge to understand and implement mechanisms that will ensure employee retention. Robyn (2012:1) asserts that 'the strength of an institution lies in its human capital,

and therefore, it is important to align human resource policies and procedures to attract and retain skilled employees'. High TIs can damage organisational performance as employees with TIs often deliver poor service and reduce overall organisational performance (Karatepe & Ngeche, 2012)

Thus, this study intends to investigate how embeddedness affects an intention to leave, with work engagement having a mediating effect. The study mainly focused on support staff employees of higher education institutions. Although the primary business of educational institutions is education and learning, the role of support staff in these environments should not be underestimated. The role of support staff is central to the general leadership, administration, and management of an institution. Moreover, departments such as Information Technology are a vehicle for innovation, central in formulating advanced modern teaching delivery methods; automation and efficiency fall under support staff. General human resource management, financial planning, and research, among others, fall under support, and it is imperative that organisations and institutions retain talented and top performers in these portfolios to retain their competitive edge. The findings of this research could potentially identify techniques that institutions of higher learning can use to manage and retain talented staff effectively.

Additionally, the research sought to contribute to the existing literature on the effectiveness of job embedding to retain staff, with work engagement having a mediating role. This research tested these constructs on support staff within the field of higher education, targeting South African institutions. If a significant relationship between factors was detected in this investigation, the researcher felt that extensive research could be conducted in this field. Subsequent to the research findings, the new knowledge gleaned from the research is anticipated to contribute to staff retention strategies. Therefore, the research aimed to investigate the correlation between job embeddedness and TI, as well as the mechanisms through which work engagement mediates these two aspects.

1.4 Rationale and Significance of The Study

1.4.1 Contribution to the literature on people management

The research results should contribute to the literature on people management as people's needs change over time, as do their psychological needs. Therefore, the need for regular

studies in people management is essential, especially with regard to support staff employed by South African institutions of higher education. The researcher hopes that the study results and his interpretations thereof will contribute and act as a foundation for future studies on job embeddedness, particularly support staff retention at institutions of higher education. This study investigates how job embeddedness influences an employee's intention to leave, with job engagement being a moderating factor.

1.4.2 Practical contribution to managers and policymakers

The result of the research will be distributed to human resources management to assist them in people management and talent retention. This study aims to provide practical results that could benefit and help management to fully comprehend the requirements and expectations of its workforce and how to address them. The findings of this research will significantly aid managers in promoting aspects of employees' work engagement and job embeddedness in order to control their intentions to leave their positions. Specifically, this knowledge can be used to improve staff retention of non-academic employees.

1.4.3 Industry contribution

The insights from this investigation can also assist in the formulation and revision of current human resources management policies and retention strategies at institutions, schools, and organisations.

1.5 Aim and Objectives of the Study

1.5.1 Main aim

The primary goal of the research was to investigate the links between employees' intention to leave their jobs and the job embeddedness of support staff at a purposefully selected institution of higher learning in South Africa, with work engagement having a mediating role as well as determining whether there are noteworthy differences between people of different educational backgrounds, experiences, and ages. Drawing from the study's results, the research sought to advance the subject of staff retention at a higher education institution by

proposing recommendations to develop embeddedness and engagement to work further, among others, as strategies to reduce TIs.

1.5.2 Secondary objectives

This research's primary goal was achieved by addressing the following objectives:

- to determine the perceived levels of job embeddedness, work engagement, and TIs among support staff employees at a selected institution of higher learning in South Africa;
- to determine the correlation between employee-perceived job embeddedness and work engagement;
- to determine the correlation of employee-perceived job embeddedness and TIs; and
- to determine how work engagement influences the relationship between an employee's intention to leave their job and job embeddedness.

1.6 Research Questions

Based on the goals listed above, the below questions were formulated to lead the study.

- What are the perceived levels of job embeddedness, TIs, and job engagement among support staff employees at a selected institution of higher learning in South Africa?
- What is the connection between employee-perceived job embeddedness and work engagement?
- What is the correlation between employee-perceived job embeddedness and TIs?
- How does work engagement function as a mediator in the relationship between intentions to leave and job embeddedness?

1.7 Demarcation/Delimitation of the Study

Demarcation and delimitation establish the research parameters. This specifies the field of study and narrows it down to a specific industry. It also clarifies the geographical boundary, also known as the study site, which is the physical location from which the samples from a study are collected.

In this research, the field of study falls under talent management.

The general sector investigated was human resources management.

The research study site serves as the geographic delimitation. According to Simons (2009:89), the study site is the actual location of the study. This research targeted the three campuses of North-West University situated in the Gauteng and North-West provinces of South Africa.

1.8 Inclusion-Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria: Qualified and skilled support staff members from all three university campuses at North-West University – preferably at level P12 or better.

Exclusion Criteria: Academic staff members. Staff from other institutions.

1.9 Definition of the Key Concepts

Listed hereunder are the terms used in this research study and their definitions.

- Job embeddedness is a combination of constructs comprising many employment elements that describe a form of pressure preventing someone employed from resigning or considering resigning from their existing employment (Yao et al., 2004).
- ‘Employee turnover is an employee’s departure from one organisation to another based on personal desires’ (Vermooten et al., 2019:45); it is one of the direct results of an institution’s lack of an effective staff retention plan.
- Work engagement refers to employees embracing an organisation’s goals and showing a positive mindset with the intention to perform optimally for the organisation (Schaufeli et al., 2002). An employee’s engagement with their work is associated with dedication, passion, and enthusiasm for their job.
- University support staff are typically the non-academic staff members whose main responsibilities involve the administration of the institution. While some of their functions may not be central to the institution’s business, they are nevertheless essential for a well-managed institution, and such functions include finance, human resources, information technology, and other central administration functions. Support staff are valuable resources because they ‘hold much of the systemic knowledge and intellectual capital required to ensure university functioning’ (Graham, 2012:439).

1.10 Ethical Considerations

1.10.1 Ethical considerations

The study respected the participants' dignity and right to privacy by adhering to the guidelines stipulated in the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act. The POPI Act was the primary reference that guided the researcher in gathering and handling confidential data and publication of the results obtained to ensure the study was legally compliant. The study avoided insensitive topics or questions that could have been seen as infringing on the study participants' vulnerability.

The researcher sought permission and approval from North-West University's Research Ethics Review Committee before the commencement of the study to ensure that the study's guiding principles were ethical and in line with the expectations of the university's ethical principles. The ethical approval letter number NWU-00604-23-A4 and the NWU Research Gatekeeper Committee (NWU-RDGC) approval letter number NWU-GK-23-144 are attached in the appendices. 'The requirement that research projects be subjected to a rigorous ethical evaluation by a Scientific Ethics Committee, regardless of the origin of such projects – academic, health care, commercial, or other – responds to the need to protect the rights of any individual involved in an investigation' (Pérez, at al., 2017:23).

1.10.2 Informed consent

The consent form was given to participants to read and sign before they could participate in the research. The consent form explained the research purpose and objectives and clearly stated the targeted sample. These consent forms were sent electronically to the targeted participants through the North-West University's Department of Communications. The form also explained that participation was purely voluntary. Thus, the right to participation or nonparticipation was guaranteed. Volunteers could withdraw from completing the questionnaire or opt not to answer specific questions. The consent form also explained the purpose of the inclusion of biographical questions, which was to create a profile of those who participated.

1.10.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

The consent form was provided to ensure that participants were reassured that anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, that the researcher was not collecting the participants' personal information and that responses could not be linked to any particular respondent. Moreover, the results of the data collected would only be presented as combined data. Confidentiality is the process of preserving access, and data collected during the study was not disclosed to third parties in the interest of protecting participants' privacy. Anonymity is about concealing the participants' identities so that collected data cannot be traced to the participant.

1.11 Limitations of Research

The study collected data from North-West University support staff or non-academic staff comprising employees from different departments, e.g., information technology staff, engineers, finance staff, human resources practitioners, researchers, management, and other administrators. The diversity of their work experience might have contributed to their varying and inconsistent experiences and knowledge.

The data collection approach was quantitative research. The primary motivation was to ensure a larger sample, and combined with the standardised questions, this allowed for an accurate, more generalised result across the more comprehensive sample, which was reasonably objective. However, it would be ideal to follow up this study with qualitative research, as this approach would facilitate follow-up questions and the discovery of some underlying reasons as it relies on unstructured nonquantitative data collection.

1.12 Study Overview

According to the format of the mini dissertation, the following chapters are summarised hereunder:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Chapter one provides the study background, a statement of the problem, presents the study questions, objectives, and justification for the research study. It also serves as an introduction to the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents an overview of the study's theoretical concepts and the conceptual framework that focuses on the subject of job embeddedness and the connections between work engagement and TI, with an emphasis on South African higher education institutions.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design

The chapter discusses and describes the approach that this investigation took and includes information on sampling protocols, data-collection instruments, the research design, and research techniques.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

The chapter presents and analyses the study's findings, including an interpretation of the connections between the variables of job embeddedness, TI, and engagement.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Recommendations based on the research study's findings make up this chapter. To help with future research, the chapter also states any limitations.

1.13 Chapter Summary

The aim of this research study was introduced in this chapter. It also provided detailed information on the study's history and described the research problem, rationale, importance, goals, and objectives. The next chapter will build on the underlying aim and objectives to formulate an overview of the theory and a conceptual framework for the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review offers an in-depth evaluation of relevant studies in the field of job embeddedness, work engagement, and how they relate to an employee's intention to leave. According to Struwig and Stead (2003:30), the primary objective of a theory overview is to provide an overview of prior research and build a justification for the study objectives and the study's current hypothesis.

Hom et al. (2020) point out that studies interrogating the reasons why workers leave their employment have taken precedence compared to those studies that examine the reasons why they remain, with the assumption being that the reasons for leaving would be the opposite of the reasons for staying. This has led the concept of job embeddedness to gain traction as of late. The idea is unique because it emphasises staying rather than exiting and emphasises the importance of connections, fit, and sacrifices, as well as the use of pre-existing explanatory frameworks (Hom et al., 2020). Moreover, Takawira et al. (2014) have further noted that work engagement has a positive mediational effect between job embeddedness and TI.

'Employees with low levels of job embeddedness and work engagement are more likely to have a higher intention of leaving the organisation, as well as leaving it' (Mitchell et al., 2001b). To successfully recruit and retain skilled people, it is essential to understand the facets that keep workers in their current employment (Lawler & Finegold, 2000). As a result, institutions of higher education can positively influence South Africa's socio-economic growth by maintaining the vital human capital that allows all parties concerned, including society and students, to receive a higher education (Van den Berg et al., 2013).

Institutions of higher learning have employed and utilised different strategies to retain talented staff members. These include suitable working environments, attractive remuneration, progressive leadership, employee engagement, and job embeddedness, among others. The impact of these strategies is generalised. Therefore, this research focused on investigating the effect of job embeddedness and work engagement on TI. The motivation was that no study had been conducted that focused on university support staff in the context of South Africa. The increasingly volatile economy and the persistent recent movement of staff are expected to have changed since previous studies. It is also assumed that with the prevalence of remote

and flexible working environments, previously important facets such as job embedding are less effective than they were before the impact of COVID-19, for instance.

2.2 Job Embeddedness

In the quest to establish why employees remain committed to the organisation of employment rather than leaving, a new term, 'job embeddedness', was coined (Mitchell et al., 2001b). Mitchell et al.'s (2001b) study concluded that exiting employees were relatively satisfied with their jobs and that they did not actively seek other jobs before leaving. Thus, leaving a company is unlikely to be a negative response to their work or company, but rather due to unplanned circumstances. Therefore, job embeddedness emphasises that other elements outside work-related ones, such as peers and the community, can significantly influence a person's choice to remain with a company. Therefore, job embeddedness is key to tying employees to their current employment due to their relationships with their peers, communities, and the general network surrounding them (Lim & Wong 2009; Mitchell et al. 2001b).

Thus, job embeddedness is a combination of constructs comprising many employment elements that describe a form of pressure that prevents an employee from resigning or intending to resign from their current employment. According to Mitchell et al. (2001b), job embeddedness is linked to three subfactors, which are fit, links, and sacrifice.

Fit refers to individuals' deemed fit with an organisation and its environment. When an employee's values, aspirations, and intentions are aligned with those of the company and the position, they are said to be a fit. In general, the better the fit, the more likely workers will feel personally and professionally connected to the company, and this increases the likelihood of employees staying in the organisation (Allen, 2006).

Sacrifice is an opportunity cost that employees may incur as they change jobs, e.g., potential promotion and relationship with colleagues. Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) claim that 'The higher the perceived cost, the greater the embeddedness will be' (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). This can include losing contact with colleagues, missing the opportunity to be involved in projects of interest, and relinquishing potential promotions and related benefits. Off-the-job sacrifices could, among others, include losing social and religious groups within the community, a network developed with service providers, and schools for children.

A link is defined as the relationship between employees, their company and the community, and links may be formal or informal. Employees may be connected to work, social, psychological, and financial networks. These networks consist of colleagues, non-work friends, and social groups in the community and surrounding communities in general. When the employees' relations with their work, companies, and colleagues are more intensive, connections become more crucial, and they are less likely to leave work, as this could alter these relationships (Allen, 2006).

Friedman and Holtom (2002) contend that the more social and professional connections a person has, the stronger the likelihood is of them remaining in their organisation. As a result, leaving a job usually involves giving up benefits, routines, or social networks. Therefore, workers who are well-embedded and satisfied are less inclined to look for new jobs. An employee is less inclined to consider leaving an organisation if there are more connections between them and their network (Lim & Wong 2009; Mitchell et al.2001b).

Several biographical aspects have been observed to relate significantly to job embeddedness. For instance, Griffeth et al.'s (2000) studies noted age-related differences. Younger employees were seen to have low job embeddedness. The likelihood of a young employee taking any available job at the beginning of their career and the quest to eventually correct the mishap was seen as a significant contributor to low job embeddedness.

With reference to gender distribution, Tanova and Holtom (2008) found that female employees were less embedded in the work environment than males. However, Allen and Shannock's (2012) studies report no correlation between the different genders.

Two more subsets within job embeddedness are worth mentioning. Off-the-job embeddedness relates to an employee's degree of connection to the community, whereas on-the-job embeddedness describes how deeply involved an employee is with their organisation (Crossley et al., 2007:1031). This study will not consider these two subsets separately but rather approach job embeddedness in terms of both of the subsets.

According to Dawley and Andrews (2012), employees who are deeply engaged in their work may find it difficult to leave their jobs. The difficulty of leaving work maybe because the employee invests a lot of time and energy in the work. Furthermore, if organisations provide resources that enable employees to perform their duties effectively, thus activating the work commitment, employees may hesitate to leave their employment (Halbesleben & Wheeler 2008).

A crucial component in establishing why workers stay with their companies is job embeddedness. Employees who are highly embedded build social bonds within their organisations and are highly engaged in acting positively at work (Jia et al., 2020). Employees who feel less embedded in their occupations may be hostile in their workplace relationships and have less affection for and commitment to their current jobs (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). As a result, they are less likely to work hard and appear to be disengaged from their jobs (Jia et al., 2020).

Consequently, creating an ideal culture of job embeddedness and utilising it as an initiative-taking concept to motivate staff to remain with an organisation can be a highly effective and valuable tool to retain staff (Yu et al., 2020).

The embeddedness in South Africa is further influenced by several other factors that are unique to the country, including the diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, its history of apartheid, and its current socioeconomic challenges. Several factors positively impact job embeddedness in South Africa, including opportunities for personal and professional growth, a supportive work environment, and feeling communally included. However, factors such as workplace discrimination, whether real or perceived and limited opportunities for upward mobility are likely to discourage job embeddedness.

However, Mitchell et al. (2001b) discovered the opposite, as they established that workers who quit were typically content with their positions and had not actively looked for other employment before quitting. Their leaving was regarded as more likely due to unplanned events than the result of a negative attitude towards their employment or the company. Accordingly, job integration emphasises that in addition to job-related variables, other variables, such as community factors, can affect an individual's decision-making.

With reference to South Africa, Schlechter et al. (2016) found that factors such as age, gender, and ethnicity have an impact on how highly qualified individuals are integrated into society and how likely they are to leave.

2.3 Work Engagement

Work engagement refers to a state characterized by a positive and satisfying state of mind related to work, marked by vitality, dedication, and absorption (Bargagliotti LA. 2012).

Vitality is defined as having a lot of energy, resilience, and an eagerness to put time and effort into one's work. Therefore, employees who possess vigour are more likely to be highly

motivated at work and to persevere in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to the state of being devoted to a particular purpose in an organisation.

When a person is deeply immersed in their work, time flies by, and they find it difficult to break away from it; Schaufeli et al. (2002) refer to this immersion as absorption.

The differences in conceptualising the definitions of work engagement are further compounded in finding a conclusive and objective measurement of it; however, to date, the UWES, a brief, valid and reliable questionnaire, is widely acceptable (Schaufeli, 2017).

Work engagement is essential for boosting employees' enthusiasm for their jobs and helping them foster a positive atmosphere at work.

Harter et al. (2002) studied 7,939 business divisions in 36 companies and found that business involvement is essential and beneficial, especially with regard to customer satisfaction, employee productivity, profits, and employee retention. They concluded that employees engaged in their work have a more favourable attitude to work.

Callado et al. (2023) in their studies found that nurses engaged to their work are more committed to the work and its organisational goals, this has a direct effect in reducing the turnover intention.

According to Snyman (2021), one of the methods to ensure that employees are engaged is for institutions to create performance management and procedures that ensure that employees' and supervisors' expectations for performance standards and objectives are consistent. To ensure employees understand what the company expect of them, they should be given an in-depth description of the performance management system.

Bakker and Demerouti (2008) propose four reasons why engaged workers are better performers than disengaged ones, noting that engaged employees had a positive outlook regarding their work, which resulted in improved work outputs.

Engaged employees were found to be more receptive to new tasks, as well as being more confident and forward-looking. This research also indicated a significant correlation between employee positiveness and engagement, resulting in better work outputs. Engaged employees are also more productive than disengaged employees because they are able to create their own resources, and individual resources such as positive energy, confidence, and self-drive lead to increased levels of work engagement.

Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004b) study of service employees from different Dutch companies showed that engaged employees are more likely to have a strong link to their organisation and have decreased TIs. This confirms the hypothesis that work engagement is negatively correlated to the intention to leave work. In contrast, Darrat et al. (2017:63) claim that

additional studies are required to comprehend employees' engagement and behaviour at work. Examining the moderate impact of organisational aspects will highlight situations where work engagement leads to positive individual outcomes.

2.4 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention refers to the employee's reported willingness to leave his/her employment within a specified period (Lazzari et al., 2022). Since employee turnover can have a detrimental impact on business and the labour market at large, it is important to understand the determinants of such a choice. Consequently, prior to someone leaving a company, they will experience the desire to quit their job and undergo some thought processes that later direct them to the actual turnover. Thus, the term for an employee's desire to leave their employment is referred to as the TI.

Therefore, this represents the phase before the turnover action. There is involuntary turnover (i.e., ill-health layoffs, retirement, and dismissal) and voluntary leaving (i.e., for several reasons, such as pay, working conditions, location, and other related causes). This study focused on TI caused by voluntary turnover. Whatever category turnover falls under significantly impacts an organisation's growth and competitiveness.

There are times when employee turnover has a positive impact on an organisation. This is relevant, especially when employees who leave are low performers, less dependable individuals, or those who annoy co-workers (Mathis & Jackson, 2006). However, in most cases, turnover has a negative impact on the organisation. Marketable employees are typically talented individuals and high performers. Turnover is costly when a position previously held by a good performer or a talented individual has to be filled, as it is challenging to find a replacement who can perform at a similar level. Among other negatives are those instances when an organisation recruits new employees to replace those who have left, as the costs incurred are significant and range from recruitment costs, which consist of advertising costs, recruitment agent fees, and downtime time of staff, to conducting interviews. In addition, training is necessary to familiarise new staff members with the organisation and its processes. Therefore, if there is a turnover of exceptionally high performers, the organisation typically experiences financial losses, which weakens its competitive advantage (Adhitiawan, 2014). The high employee turnover not only involves costs incurred to recruit and train new employees, but it also results in the organisation's loss of resources such as skills, knowledge,

and experiences that may affect existing employees' morale (Ponnu & Chuah, 2010). When retained employees have to deal with extra responsibilities or tasks that they have not previously done without having the skills and ability to manage them, losing employees who are high performers can reduce an organisation's ability to innovate (Radjasa, 2012). Employees also build relationships with clients due to their direct access to customers, which is ideal for an organisation, as it leads to repeated purchases and presents a good image of the business to the outside world. Therefore, losing employees who can provide optimal service to clients is significantly detrimental as it may result in a company losing its clients or its relationships with its clients (Adhitiawan, 2014).

Additionally, if an organisation continuously experiences high staff turnover, this can cause instability for remaining employees and clients because existing clients are forced to deal with new employees repeatedly, and such frequent changes portray an organisation as being unstable. Furthermore, experienced high-performing employees understand the organisation's business and efficiently execute their tasks. They also have much more institutional knowledge than low or average performers. Suppose an employee switches to a competing company and divulges any process or product that their previous company was developing to their new company. In that case, the company they have left will lose a potential advantage and may suffer losses. Losses may arise out of competing companies knowing, for example, how the other company budgets and prices goods or services and uses such insider information to win project tenders or compete for business (Adhitiawan, 2014).

Several factors cause employees to choose to leave their jobs. The Gallup organisation surveyed a million employees and eighty thousand managers, as published in a book entitled *First Break All the Rules*. The survey results highlighted that the top leadership's management style was the primary reason for them quitting their jobs. On the other hand, it was noted that the employees' primary needs were not related to money but had more to do with how they were treated and appreciated (Kristianto, 2009). Managers can stress employees in various ways, such as being too controlling, too suspicious, too interfering, pretentious, and too critical (Kristianto, 2009). Managers sometimes forget that workers are not fixed assets but free agents. If this adverse situation is sustained for too long, the intention to quit mindset is activated in an employee.

Turnover has significant effects on organisations, including potential costs for human capital losses and interruptions in ongoing organisational activities (Smyth et al., 2009:42). The literature states that embeddedness and work participation may reasonably influence employees' intentions to leave (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Mitchell et al., 2001b).

Turnover intention is generally accepted as a significant predictor of turnover, which is a good indicator of eventual turnover. High employment turnover can lead to financial losses such as job advertisements, job recruitment costs, and education of new employees, which can also undermine the remaining employees' morale and hamper their work engagement (Karatepe & Shahriari, 2014:16). In an educational institution, other losses are difficult to quantify financially, such as the loss of institutional memory. In some cases, the loss of talented staff hinders competitive advantages. It is for these reasons that researchers remain interested in learning more about staff turnover, as retaining talent and the stability of teams is a solid competitive strategy that is expected to increase significantly in the immediate future. There are other schools of thought, and Lee et al., (2014) suggest that decisions to leave a job may not necessarily be the consequence of long-term job discontent and may occasionally be made without much thought.

When it comes to the issue of staff turnover, the employer must first understand why employees join, stay, and leave an institution. According to Matsheng (2020:11), it is increasingly evident that other aspects, such as measuring employee engagement, job embeddedness, and monitoring labour turnover, will contribute significantly to organisational and workforce sustainability.

To effectively address turnover, it is essential to identify the underlying factors that sway individual decision-making processes. One such factor is a job's embeddedness, which acknowledges the multifaceted connections employees form within their work. Furthermore, work engagement has emerged as an essential factor linked to achieving organisational objectives, including TI.

2.5 Relationship Between Job Embeddedness and Work Engagement

Although job embeddedness suggests that employees are kept from resigning from their current employment through a combination of surrounding constructs (Mitchell et al., 2001b), it is unclear whether embedded support staff employees within a higher institution of education are indeed engaged in their work. Based on the existing literature, it is fair to assume that there is a connection between work engagement and embeddedness. However, it is essential to appreciate to what extent these two constructs relate, as this can directly enhance the knowledge of people management in higher education.

Takawira et al. (2014), focusing on the academic staff of a university in their study, conclude that there is a significant correlation between job embeddedness and work engagement. Based on these findings, they recommend that the higher education sector promote staff members' vigour and dedication by providing fulfilling job activities, flexible work schedules, opportunities for professional development, and incentive pay. However, their findings revealed that job embeddedness has a higher negative impact on TI than work engagement. These outcomes concur with Halbesleben and Wheeler's (2008) conclusions. Shibiti et al. (2018) state that workers who show high interest, determination, and mental flexibility when they do their daily tasks are likely to invest more in their jobs. Consequently, their work commitment favourably influences their work engagement. Employees who support work expend significant energy and are reluctant to disengage. Employees also strongly relate to their work to the point where they also strongly identify with their peers and their community (Takawira et al., 2014). Furthermore, Bakker and Bal (2010), in their research, concluded that engaged workers performed their jobs more effectively than disengaged workers, supporting the same hypothesis.

Ng and Feldman (2010) investigated the effect of job embeddedness on innovative behaviours. They studied three categories of behaviour related to innovation: producing innovative ideas, spreading ideas and innovations throughout the company, and putting the innovation into practice. These behaviours have a clear connection to work engagement. Ng and Feldman (2010) found that job embeddedness was related to innovation-related behaviours because embeddedness 'fosters a strong sense of responsibility', and resultantly, embedded employees were found to be motivated enough to move forward in the organisation's best interests by displaying elevated levels of work engagement through increased innovation-related behaviours.

Highly embedded employees have accumulated work resources, which they feel obligated to repay to the organisation, and therefore, demonstrate positive attitudes such as being engaged and satisfied with their work (Ampofo, 2020; Zhang et al., 2019). Embedded workers might feel that in exchange for the organisation's kindness and concern, they should return the affection shown by staying with the company. According to the abovementioned literature, employees are more likely to display positive attitudes like job satisfaction and work engagement when they are aware that the organisation has given them resources to increase their level of embeddedness in it.

According to the Conservation of Resources Theory, individuals strive to obtain, retain, foster, and protect those things they centrally value (Hobfoll et al., 2018). In addition to valuing

benefits like seniority and status within an organisation, employees may be motivated to preserve and maintain social resources like established relationships with co-workers. COR theory explains to a greater extent the human behaviour based on the evolutionary need to acquire and conserve resources for survival, which is central to human existence. Furthermore, Hobfoll et al. (2018) posit that employees must invest in their resources to prevent the loss of these valuable resources. In this case, embedded employees support their resources and efforts to safeguard necessary job resources, and this behaviour directly increases their levels of work engagement to preserve valued benefits.

Another important argument for work engagement is proposed by Lee et al. (2004), who assert that employees who are embedded in their communities tend to perceive them as resources worth safeguarding. Therefore, they are motivated to maintain their employment to continue to stay in their communities. In reference to the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll et al. (2018) claims that employees are motivated to preserve resources they highly treasure. To preserve these psychological, emotional, and physical resources, they commit to them, resulting in their direct engagement with their work. Superior performance is related to well-preserved employment. The inability to preserve a job is considered to have a direct negative impact on the 'links' in the embeddedness of the job.

Ringl's (2013:53) study of the relationship between job engagement and embeddedness found that these two variables are related. Organisational fit and dedication are the two most associated variables between job engagement and embeddedness. He concluded that organisations seeking to maximise employees commitment to work must hire employees who are compatible the organisation's objectives, plans, and values in order to protect essential workers' resources. He acknowledges that most organisations are already practising this principle in their recruitment processes, and his findings further support this argument.

However, Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) suggest that work engagement could be more stable as it changes over time and is highly susceptible to work requirements and resources. However, the embeddedness of the job, changes slowly as it requires drastic event changes to minimise its adverse effects at work. Therefore, job embeddedness is favourable in reducing the basis for employees to start to think about leaving an organisation.

2.6 Relationship Between Work Engagement and Turnover Intention

Schaufeli et al. (2002) studied work engagement and found that engaged workers are more likely to stay with the organisation. He notes that it is more difficult for active employees to leave work than it is for employees with low job engagement. This is primarily because employees who are highly engaged in their work tend to have fun and enjoy working, investigating challenges, and formulating solutions to problems as a source of inspiration for them. This makes them more productive and energises them. Furthermore, high-engagement employees tend to be better positioned for resource allocation, development opportunities, and career advancement (Gutermann et al., 2017). An organisation's employee who has a strong emotional connection to the organisation's objectives is said to be actively engaged at work. May et al. (2004) suggest that the drivers of employee engagement include, among other things, employee relations, exciting work-related tasks, and resources to effectively perform tasks, as well as rewards and rewards linked to work. As a result, highly engaged employees have less intention of leaving work because highly engaged employees are excited and aligned to organisational objectives as they find meaning in the work they do.

Other previous studies have established that engaged employees are less likely to leave their current employers because they are enthusiastic, find reason and purpose in their work responsibilities and can deal with job-related demands and expectations (Takawira et al., 2014; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Additionally, engaged workers are more likely to stay with their present employer, whereas disengaged employees tend to leave their organisations to look for meaning and comfort in their careers elsewhere. Nevertheless, despite the strong correlation, additional investigation into the subject matter is necessary to conclusively appreciate the connections or relationships between work engagement and employees' TIs. This is particularly relevant in Africa, as most previous studies were carried out in other parts of the world.

2.7 Relationship Between Job Embeddedness and Turnover Intention

According to a number of studies, job embeddedness is negatively related to TI (Holton et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2004; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Takawira et al., 2014). From another perspective, workers who are more committed to their work are less likely to plan to leave. Employee

attrition is lower when employees feel a sense of belonging to the company and their roles therein.

Job embeddedness enhances an individual's sense of belonging and attachment to the organisation, making it more challenging for them to relinquish their ties. The more attached an employee is, the more difficult it is to leave the organisation. Ratnawati et al. (2020), in their study of 209 employees in Indonesia, concluded that job embeddedness can indeed be used a strategy to reduce voluntary turnover intention. On the other hand, employees with low attachment with the organisation often think to leave the organisation and have a high desire to leave their employment. Low job embeddedness impacts the performance of the employees because employees often come late and have no concentration in work, which is detrimental to the success of the organisation (Ratnawati et al., 2020).

Additionally, the sacrifices an employee believes they would have to make if they left their current job can act as a deterrent to turnover. The higher the perceived costs of leaving, such as losing potential promotions, relationships, or benefits, the lower the TIs tend to be (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008).

According to Dawley and Andrews (2012), highly engaged workers might find it harder to leave their current jobs because they have invested so much time and effort into it. Additionally, workers may be reluctant to quit if the company offers resources that help them carry out their responsibilities well, thus activating work engagement (Halbesleben & Wheeler 2008).

The Theory of Job Embeddedness highlights the fact that workers stay with companies because of their formal and informal connections with colleagues and friends. The comfort they experience from familiarity contributes to satisfying their social needs, and they desire to take advantage of several opportunities within organisations and communities. This theory also suggests that employees who are a fit in their work and the organisation are embedded in their jobs, which encourages them to stay in their jobs. Work embeddedness is a significant component in understanding why employees stay with a company, and it offers valuable insights into the employees' dedication and commitment to the company (Mitchell et al., 2001b).

Additionally, Holtom et al. (2008) identified a strong relationship between the intention to leave and actual turnover. Even in cases where TIs do not result in substantial departures, they nevertheless negatively impact the organisation's efficacy because unfulfilled TIs among employees often translate into other types of withdrawal behaviour (Abbas et al., 2014). Thus,

identifying counter mechanisms to ensure TIs are not there in the first place can help avoid costs related to turnover and other withdrawal actions.

However, Mitchell et al.'s (2001b) studies concluded that employees who left their employment were largely content with their positions and were not actively seeking out new jobs before departing. Unforeseen circumstances more likely caused their departure as opposed to unhappiness with their work or the organisation. Mitchell et al. (2001b) claim that job embeddedness might explain why some employees remain in their work positions where they are unhappy even if they have better options somewhere.

2.8 The Mediational Role of Work Engagement

The relationships described earlier, and their relatedness are depicted in Figure 1 below.

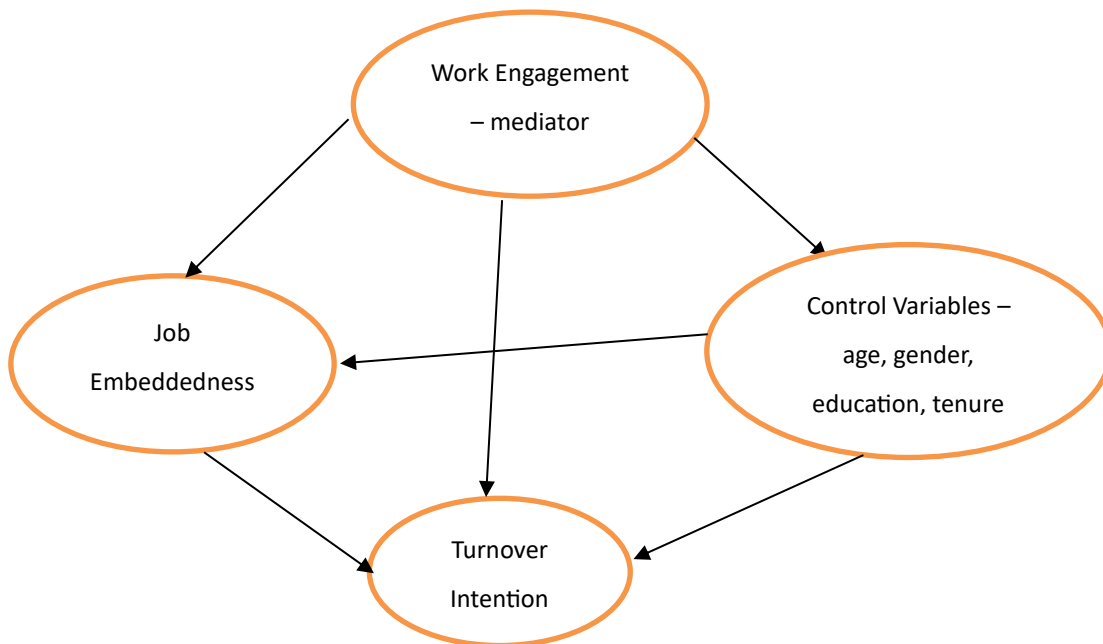


Figure 1: A model that illustrates potential relationships between variables.

The above research model depicts the relationships between variables. According to the model, job embeddedness and TI are mediated by work engagement. The model also presupposes that both job embeddedness and work engagement reduce intentions to leave a job. Khan et al.'s (2018) studies targeting hotel employees conclude that embedded employees demonstrate increased work engagement and performance, resulting in lowered

intentions of leaving; they suggest that the management should improve job embeddedness and increase work engagement and performance of its staff to reduce TIs.

To a greater extent, the available literature suggests that embeddedness affects employees' TIs, with work engagement often playing a mediating role in this relationship. Strategies that include supporting the development of functional work relationships among peers, fostering organisational identity, professional identity, a positive work atmosphere, and promoting work engagement are essential in the pursuit of reducing TIs among employees in various industries. Organisations should focus on creating a desirable work environment, providing fair compensation and offering advancement opportunities to improve job satisfaction and lower TIs (Zhang et al., 2018). Additionally, organisations should pay attention to the work practice environment and pressure to work to stimulate work engagement and reduce TIs.

Alexandrov et al. (2007) and Yavas et al. (2008) propose that gender, organisational tenure, age, level of education, and organisational tenure may influence the constructs of relationships and, therefore, classify them as control variables.

Other than the abovementioned generalised studies, the researcher could not find any literature or study targeting non-academic staff members of higher educational institutions. This staff subset is equally essential for a well-administered and managed institution. There is also a gap in the literature about other variables after the COVID-19 pandemic; with the advent of work-from-home working arrangements, variables like job embeddedness are likely to be shifted.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

This section discusses the theoretical framework with reference to the three variables under study: job embeddedness, work participation, and TI.

2.9.1 The Job-Embeddedness Theory

According to Yao et al. (2004), job embeddedness is a combination of constructs comprising many employment elements that describe a form of pressure preventing an employee from resigning or intending to resign from their current employment. These elements fall into three categories, namely: links; fit; and sacrifice. The Theory of Job Integration was proposed by

Mitchell et al. (2001b), who noted that employee turnover is affected by the connection and relationship between employees and other employees and activities, a job's adaptability, the workplace, and employees' sacrifices made for the organisation (Kujik, 2018). The theory suggests that several elements influence an employee to stay with an organisation. The more links that they have with both their organisation and the outside community, the more likely they are to remain engaged and committed to their organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001b). On the other hand, an employee with limited links who does not fit well with the organisation is thought to possess little job embeddedness, and they are highly likely to leave their job, as they have nothing to sacrifice.

When applying the Job Embeddedness Theory to manage the turnover of staff, management should ensure that each person is not only in a position that reflects their talents and skills but that the role also has meaning for their work (McDougall, 2018). Employees remain in their current jobs if they continue to feel a sense of embeddedness in their jobs and their environment. Otherwise, they are likely to be receptive to TI appeals.

In reference to the Theory of Job Embeddedness, employee turnover is lower for those with higher levels of embeddedness in terms of fit, ties, and sacrifice (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Therefore, to improve retention and decrease costs related to hiring, training, and turnover, most organisations have started considering and strengthening job embeddedness factors as a strategy to retain employees.

2.9.2 Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory

Schaufeli (2002) defined 'work engagement' as a fulfilled, positive mental state expressed through dedication, immersion, and vigour.

Engaged workers consistently display three universal behaviours they typically:

- promote the company to co-workers, potential hires, and clients.
- and steadfastly choose to remain a part of the company, ignoring any opportunities for employment elsewhere; and
- invest more time, energy, and commitment to help the company succeed (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) hypothesis is a theoretical framework that has been used to explain the causes of work engagement' (Schaufeli et al., 2017).

According to the theory, every workplace offers unique resources to employees and makes unique demands on them. Workplace demands can include mental demands, which negatively impact employees' willingness to engage in their work (Schaufeli et al., 2017). Conversely, though, job resources relate to an employee's preparedness to apply their abilities and efforts to the task, increasing their degree of work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2017). Broad work resources have the potential to override the unfavourable effects of work demands, such as the desire to quit.

According to research, one of the indications of TI is the desire to leave a company (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). Employee turnover can result in significant costs to the organisation, costs related to recruitment, selection, training, or the use of temporary workers (Morrell et al., 2004). Coetzee and Schreuder (2010) posit that the issue of high employee turnover is exacerbated by external variables, including talent competition and the availability of other opportunities both locally and internationally. Embeddedness and engagement, on the other hand, have grown in popularity as ideas that support employee retention (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). As a theory of employee retention, job embeddedness includes an array of factors that prevent someone from giving up their job (Mitchell et al., 2001a).

2.10 Conclusion

The primary intention of this literature review was to analyse and present the most recent theoretical information currently available in relation to this investigation. The literature review was developed by looking into the three constraints of the research, namely embeddedness, work engagement, and TI. The analysis also investigated related studies that have tested similar relationships and hypotheses to this study. Based on this review, several publications confirm the effect of embeddedness on TIs (Takawira et al., 2014; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Mitchell et al., 2001b). The literature also documents the mediational role work engagement can have on job embeddedness to affect TI negatively. The mediational role of work engagement has not been widely tested. This research study sought to acquire and provide conclusive knowledge to close the gap. Moreover, with the new ways of working, it is essential to test these principles to see if they are still practical tools for management and human resources as retention strategies. It was also noted that while several studies have been carried out in other regions, Africa has made little contribution to the research topic.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the study methodology and design that were used in this research study and includes providing the background of the research paradigm, methods, designs, sampling methods, and sample sizes of research methods.

The chapter also explains the underlying reason for the choice of the research collection instrument and how data was analysed. In addition, the collected data's reliability and effectiveness are discussed together with the research ethics considerations.

Collis and Hussey (2003:150) define methodology as the entire research study process, and data collection and analysis are part of this. As a result, the methodology's main goal is to specify the reason for collecting data, the method and schedule used, and the procedure followed for data analysis.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a worldview or set of beliefs that is chosen specifically for the research. A research paradigm is a conceptual framework that researchers use to investigate all the methodologies they use in individual studies to determine how data gets collected, analysed, and evaluated and how deductions are made. A paradigm directs and shapes a study, decides how findings will be interpreted, and deduces meaning from the data that has been gathered and analysed.

For this research, a post-positivism approach was considered. According to Halfpenny (2014), positivism is a research paradigm that uses scientific evidence to study social issues and reveal social behaviour. This study aimed to develop its structure by studying phenomena of interest, namely embedding, working engagement and intentions to leave higher education institutions. This research used a post-positivism approach because it offers a solid framework for testable data and provides theories to establish norms.

The post-positive perspective is based on the premise that reality is subjective, multidimensional, created in people's minds, cannot be fully understood, but is approximate. In essence, reality is not a static thing. Still, reality is generally accepted as the product of research participants and is affected by contexts such as gender, race, and age (De Vos et

al., 2014:148). Therefore, participants may see the problem differently, and the study's findings may be influenced by their thoughts and realities (De Vos, 2014:148).

A study relies on generalised outcomes and evidence. The post-positivist model suggests that the researcher can use the research method to collect data while staying independent and external. Post-positivist research yields accurate, repeatable conclusions that are, in most instances, impartial, comprehensive, accurate, and instructive.

3.3 Research Approach

There are three types of approaches: inductive, deductive, and abductive. An abductive approach is a research approach that starts with a surprising fact, and the research study is devoted to explaining this puzzling phenomenon. The primary distinction between deductive and inductive research methodologies is that deductive methods seek to test the theory, while inductive methods are more concerned with developing a new theory based on the data (Gabriel, 2013).

In this study, the deductive approach was used, which has been used in existing research (Hom et al., 2017; Mitchell et al., 2001b; Takawira et al., 2014). The researcher had to study what others had already done and read existing articles and theories on the subject matter. The study adopted a quantitative research approach. In a quantitative study, participant data is gathered from various locations in the university as participants respond to questionnaires based on the conditions that best describe their situations. Existing scales are considered with minor adjustments, as they are readily available and cover significant job facets such as embeddedness, work engagement and TI. There are existing scales that make comparisons and interpretations of results against available data much more meaningful. These forms are generally accepted within the industry. However, the downside is the limited flexibility and the loss of uniqueness in the study.

This research study gathered data using questionnaires, and these questionnaires used closed-ended questions. The consent form clearly stated that the respondents' judgement in answering the questions would not be investigated. The SPSS 28 statistical data analysis application was used to code and interpret the collected data.

A quantitative cross-sectional research approach was used. Numerical data was gathered over two months, from July up to mid-September 2023. 'A cross-sectional study is a study that measures the result and the exposures of the study participants at the same time' (Setia,

2016:261). Data was collected once from participants, and there was no need for any follow-up session.

3.4 Methodological Choice

The study used a mono-method quantitative research method, as it intends to investigate the relationship between job embeddedness, work engagement, and intention to leave. Thus, only one type of method was used. The data was collected in numerical format. Therefore, the information gathered can be analysed using quantitative analysis techniques. According to Kothari (2004:56), 'a quantitative approach is the generation of data in quantitative form, which can be subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis formally and rigidly'. The researcher evaluated data using statistical processes to produce impartial results that could be generalised to larger populations. The questions in the questionnaire are direct and contain quantifiable phrases (Goertzen, 2017:12). 'In a quantitative study, the researchers quantify the problem by transforming numerical data into constructs and looking for relationships between these constructs to formulate predictive models that can be generalisable to the populations the researchers drew the samples' (Violante & Vezzetti, 2017).

The single-method quantitative research method was suitable for this study, as the aim was to study, numerically, the relationship between embeddedness, engagement, and TIs. There are other research methods, such as qualitative and mixed methods. The qualitative approach is deemed suitable when researchers want to investigate data regarding people's viewpoints and their experiences in a non-numerical format (Nassaji, 2015). A mixed-method study approach 'is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding and affirmation of findings with more validity opportunities' (Timans et al., 2019). Therefore, a mixed method and qualitative approach were inappropriate for this investigation.

3.5 Research Design

This study used the correlational design method, where the researcher examined the relationships between two or more variables (Bettany-Saltikov & Whittaker, 2013). Given that the primary goal of the study was to examine the relationships between work engagement, TIs, and job embeddedness, the correlational design was a suitable option. Other designs,

such as trials and simulations, are beneficial when a researcher wants to determine the extent of cause and impact (Park & Park, 2016). It does not answer the question of how, when, or why a characteristic occurs but answers the question of what.

'Furthermore, a correlational design can allow researchers to gain insight into trends, opinions, or attitudes of larger populations through quantitative instruments designed to collect data from a sample population' (Platow et al., 2015).

3.6 Time Horizon

This study used the cross-sectional study approach, and the data was collected in just over two months, from July until mid-September 2023. The research involved the application of a survey design to gather quantitative data on independent variables over a specific period.

According to Melnikovas (2018:34), the research time horizon is cross-sectional or longitudinal. A cross-sectional study is an approach that facilitates the collection of data at a specific scheduled time, whilst a longitudinal approach facilitates the collection of data repeatedly over some time to allow for data comparisons. 'Cross-sectional studies occur over the short term and serve to examine the data received from the study participants at a single moment in time' (Collis & Hussey, 2014: 63).

3.7 Research Methodologies/Processes

3.7.1 Population

This study focused on higher learning in South Africa. The North-West University and all three of its campuses, namely Potchefstroom, Vaal, and Mafikeng, were selected for this study. 'Sampling refers to the technique or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the sample' (Kothari, 2004:52)." The sample was made up of support staff employees who were academically skilled or better. This ideally refers to staff graded 12 or higher. Most of the employees in this sample were senior technocrats, managers, and senior administrative personnel; just over a thousand employees fell into this category.

3.7.2 Sample Method/Technique and Sample Size

Sampling is defined as 'the selection of some part of an aggregate or totality based on which a judgement or influence on the aggregate or totality is made' (Kothari, 2004:152). The study's target population was 1,000 employees, and the survey communication was sent to all of them. These were mainly grade 12 support class employees or better, as they formed part of the senior technocrats, managers, supervisors, and senior administrators. The ethnic and gender distribution was expected to reflect the ethnic and gender demographic spread of the university. The study focussed on institutions of higher learning in South Africa. All of the North-West University's three campuses were selected for this study, namely, the Potchefstroom, Vaal, and Mafikeng campuses.

The study used convenience sampling, and from the target population, those who were reachable by email and willing to participate were sampled for the study. Sekaran (2003:276) defines convenience sampling as the process of gathering data from population members who are easily accessible.

The convenience sampling method is a non-probability or non-random sampling technique whereby members of the target population who meet specific practical requirements—like accessibility and availability at a particular time—and who express interest in participating in the study are included (Etikan et al., 2016:2). Based on Singh and Masuku's (2014) previously released tables and utilising a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, a population of 1,000 people resulted in an estimate of 278 respondents.

The validity of a study's findings depends on having an adequate sample size. The sampling procedure should consider any risks or outcomes related to the sample size (Blaikie & Priest, 2019:545).

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

According to Midgley (2016), data collection is the systematic gathering of information in order to achieve research goals. A variety of tools, including interviews, questionnaires, observations, pre-existing records, and technological devices, can be used to gather data.

In this study, online survey questionnaires were the instrument of choice, and these were distributed to the participants through the Communication Department.

The survey was divided into three main sections:

Section 1: Collected the participants' biographical information using multiple choice questions.

Section 2: Related to job embeddedness, which was made up of nine questions.

Section 3: Concerned with work engagement, which was made up of nine questions.

Section 4: Recorded TI, which was made up of three questions.

Sections 2 to 4: Focused on the collection of participants' responses on the three broad study aspects of embeddedness, engagement, and TIs. Participants used a three-point Likert scale to answer questions to indicate their level of agreement with each stated statement. Each variable was measured in the same way that previous studies had measured comparable factors. Email-based questionnaires were chosen because they were more cost-effective. They also offered participants a high degree of discretion, ease, and simplicity to complete the task. An efficient way to collect data is through email-based survey instrumentation, as it allows a participant to select a sample of a particular population (Bashir, 2017).

Job Embeddedness

The job embeddedness measuring instruments were developed from the global measure of job embeddedness as developed by Crossley et al. (2007), the JES-9. This is a self-assessment tool with three scales that define job embeddedness and consists of nine elements, namely links (for example, 'my closest friends are in the organisation'), fit (e.g., 'my job utilises my skills and talents well') and sacrifice s(e.g., 'I would sacrifice a lot if I left this job').

The questionnaire was developed to collect responses on a three-point Likert scale ranging from Agree (1) to Disagree (3). The Likert scale is an ideal tool for calculating results, as it yields more accurate results than any other method (Bashir, 2017). The Cronbach alpha coefficient indicates the level of reliability of all questions in the questionnaire (Bashir, 2017), and the Likert scale 'has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.91 for job embeddedness' (Van Dyk et al., 2013).

Work Engagement

The factors were measured using the modified UWES-9 version developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004a). There are nine items that comprise three categories. Under vigour, there are three items, for example, 'When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work'. Dedication had three items, for example, 'I am always excited when doing my work'. Absorption had three items, for example, 'Time moves too fast when I am at work'. The response alternatives were measured using the 3-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Agree) to 3 (Disagree). Lower scores

demonstrate greater work engagement. For reference, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the nine-item scale range from 0.85 to 0.92 (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Regarding research conducted in South Africa, a one-factor model is the optimum way of operationalising the UWES-9 (De Bruin & Henn, 2013).

Turnover intention

Sjöberg and Sverke's (2000) Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-3) was used to assess TI using a three-question Likert-type scale. The scale evaluates how strongly a person intends to leave their current employment (for example, 'I feel that I could leave this job'). From 1 (Agree) to 3 (Disagree), seven possible responses were possible. The scores for the TI Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.83 (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000) and 0.79 (Diedericks & Rothmann, 2014).

Control variables

The participants' age and their period of employment was measured using a four-point scale. The level of education was measured using a 5-point scale. Whilst gender was measured using a four-point scale, both binary and nonbinary, participants could choose whether to answer. The biographical data was used to create a participant profile, and respondents have access to the final dissertation upon request. Thus, the data was used to characterise the sample's profile and to see if there were any relationships with the factors.

3.9 Measuring Instrument: Validity, Reliability, And Trustworthiness

The study collected data using a quantitative approach; an online questionnaire was used to collect the data. Once the data was collected, it was entered into an Excel report. According to quantitative research requirements, there are concepts used to measure the quality of the instrument used, these are validity and reliability. Validity is defined as the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study, whilst reliability relates to the consistency of a measure (Heale & Twycross, 2015:66). Validity represents the degree to which the tool utilised can consistently provide almost the same results when the same study is repeated in the same situation. Homogeneity was used to ensure that all participants received the same questionnaire.

The North-West University's Statistics Department assisted in validating the collected data and developing the statistical summary. Data analysis procedures were followed according to Cronbach's alpha coefficients and exploratory factor analysis.

Reliability refers to 'the accuracy and precision of the measurement and the absence of differences in the results if the research was repeated' (Collis & Hussey, 2014:52). Although the study was quantitative, the scale to respond to the questions measures how the participants perceived and felt at that time. The same question might be answered differently if the study is repeated. As a result, producing findings with high reliability can be difficult; however, an estimated rate of reliability was used.

In this study, the researcher attempted to produce reliable results by resisting the urge for confirmation bias by consciously treating all collected data in the same way, being honest when analysing collected data and avoiding any temptation to manipulate the data (Denscombe, 2014:358). In addition, consulting the study supervisor and statistician and receiving guidance from them eliminated the possibility of this bias.

Validity is a measurement used to rate the effectiveness of a study design and its methodology. The validity of the study findings can be determined according to whether they accurately reflect the topic being researched (Collis & Hussey, 2014:53). The collected data is likely to be fully accurate. The targeted participants were professionals who had a good understanding of the purposes of the study, and there were no material benefits to be gained from participation.

The Cronbach test is generally used, and the acceptable coefficient rate is a score of 0.7 or better. Omega coefficients greater than .70 were considered to be fair in terms of the measuring devices' reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Descriptive statistics were also measured in this study and included the calculation of three distinct concepts: mode distribution, standard deviation, and mean (Wiid & Diggins 2013: 248).

3.10 Data Collection/Fieldwork

Data collection only began after the requisite ethical clearance from the North-West University's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (FEMS-REC) was received. Prior to the distribution of questionnaires, additional approval from the university's gatekeepers was also sought to ensure that the questionnaires met the

university's guidelines for accessing and collecting data from students and staff members. Ethics guidelines, informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality were all followed. The survey was sent online by Google Forms, a cloud-based survey tool that collects user data through customised surveys. An email with a link to the survey and an informed consent form was sent to potential participants. The email invitation provided information regarding the purpose of the study, the configuration, the duration of the study and the time required for completion. The data collected using Google Forms was automatically linked to an Excel report that consolidated all participants' feedback.

A written consent form was distributed to the participants, containing a pledge to uphold their privacy and confidentiality in accordance with the POPI Act. They were also advised of their freedom to withdraw at any moment without repercussions. It was clearly stated that the feedback was only accessible to the researcher, who had no knowledge of who did or did not complete the questionnaire; this was to remove fear and promote honest feedback.

3.11 Power Relationships and Gatekeeper Intervention

The researcher was an employee of the institution where the study was carried out. However, there was no conflict of interest as the researcher was not part of the People and Culture Department, the field of the subject area. The researcher did not have any vested interests in any outcome, and neither did he stand to benefit in any way. The Central Communication Department distributed the link for the online survey. A disclaimer clause was inserted stating that the views and opinions expressed by the researcher did not necessarily represent the affiliated institution's official policy or position.

3.12 Data Coding and Analysis

Data analysis means 'studying tabulated material to determine inherent facts or meanings. It involves breaking down existing complex factors into simpler parts and putting the parts together in new arrangements for interpretation' (Singh & Jain, 2013). A statistical procedure was used to evaluate, summarise, and analyse the data. For this study, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 28 (SPSS v28) was used to calculate the relationships between the variables to address the study objectives.

The process of organising non-numerical data gathered from participants, putting them into sets, and then allocating statistical codes is referred to as quantitative data coding. Codes enable the conversion of data into statistical information that can be statistically and meaningfully evaluated. The data was coded and analysed using SPSS software. A statistical consultant assisted in coding and interpreting the coded data. The factor correlation matrix was used to enable the measurement of the strengths of the relationships among the variables.

Another tool that was used to measure the strength of the relationships between variables was the Pearson correlation test. Depending on the magnitude of the correlation coefficient, the strengths of the relationships can be zero, weak, moderate, firm, or perfect, and their direction can be positive or negative (r). 'Effect sizes are calculated with a 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$) to be considered significant, whereas effect sizes are classified where 0.1 denotes a small effect, 0.3 a medium effect, and 0.5 a large effect' (Steyn, 2002).

The study made use of descriptive statistics, which are calculations of three distinct concepts: mean, standard deviation, and mode distribution (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:248).

3.13 Study Limitations

The study targeted non-academic employees from an institution of higher learning. The selected institution had three campuses across two South African provinces. The institution was selected due to its proximity and accessibility to the researcher. It might not be easy to generalise the outcome as the survey only targeted a single institution. With more time and more resources, it is advisable to cover more than one institution to get more substantive results from a wider audience.

As participation was purely voluntary, it was not feasible to expect feedback from the majority of the target population. Reasonable follow-ups were done, but data was collected only on those who were willing to participate. Employees within the targeted group who were inaccessible by email for several reasons were excluded. It is possible that if all targeted participants had participated, the results might have been different.

Furthermore, as the study targeted non-academic employees who are qualified and skilled, it meant that all academic staff and semi- or non-skilled staff were excluded from the study. Therefore, the results of the study are not applicable to these excluded groups.

3.14 Chapter Summary

The chapter detailed the methodological design of the research that guided the study. The study used a post-positivism approach that provided a solid basis for testable data and theory for the study's questions. Thereafter, a deductive approach was used, as the study tested existing theories.

In general, the study was quantitative research, using questionnaire-like surveys to collect participants' data. In design, correlation design studies were used to explore the relationships between variables. The target population was 1,000, and the expected sample size was 278. The data was analysed using SPSS software. Description statistics also supplemented data analysis and encoding.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This study aimed to investigate the influence of job embeddedness on TI and the mediational role of work engagement in higher educational institutions in South Africa, primarily targeting support staff. It sought to establish whether there were relationships among the factors. Quantitative data was gathered using electronically administered questionnaires distributed to participants, and SPSS v 28 was used to analyse and summarise the findings. The results were discussed in line with the investigation's questions and objectives, and the results were compared to similar prior studies.

This chapter presents and discusses the findings and results. The participants' biographical details are presented, as is an analysis of the descriptive statistics. This chapter covers the survey response rates and provides an evaluation of the validity and reliability of the scales used in the study. It discusses the connections between embeddedness and the intention to leave, as well as the role of job engagement as a mediating factor based on the results. Before moving on to Chapter 5, which discusses the significance of the results, ideas for future studies, limits, and conclusion, the findings are briefly described.

4.2 Response Rate

Based on the completed online questionnaires, the study was based on responses from 102 respondents, which represents 37% response rate of the target population. The total population of the study was 1,000 staff members. The target population was estimated to be 278 based on tables already published, using a 95% confidence level with a 5% error margin of error of 5% (Singh & Masuku, 2014). According to Nulty (2008), 'for electronically distributed questionnaires, the acceptable rate ranges between 30-40%', and thus, the study was able to meet the minimum required response for electronic-related questionnaires.

Several factors affected the response rate. The university environment is predominantly a research one, and therefore, many studies are regularly carried out involving staff members. Completing questionnaires is time-consuming; moreover, if the same participants are targeted frequently to participate in several studies, this often leads to fatigue and disinterest. Sometimes, staff members are already overloaded with their daily work and do not have any

spare time to complete questionnaires. As there was no incentive attached to completing the survey, other participants were not motivated to participate. Other reasons for the lack of participation include a lack of interest in the subject matter and a lack of trust and willingness of respondents to submit their responses, all of which contributed to the low turnout.

4.3 Biographical Information Presentation

The characteristics of the participants' biographical information are summarised in Table 1. There were 102 participants, with 33% being male and 67% being female.

The age categories ranged from 18 to 65 years in four distinct groups that the participants could choose from. Most participants fell in the age range of 29 to 40 years old, representing 44% of the participants, followed by the 41 to 50-year age group with 27% of participants. The group with the least participants was the 18- to 28-year age group, representing just 4% of participants.

The level of education was classified into five distinct categories, namely matric, diploma, degree, master's/professional qualification, and PhD. The majority of participants' highest level of education was a degree, representing 47% of the participants. The smallest group was the PhD group, accounting for only 1%.

The study also collected data recording the participants' tenure period, which was also categorised into four distinct categories that participants could choose from. The 0 to 5-year tenure group had most of the participants with 36 % of the respondents, whilst the 11 to 15-year tenure group had the lowest ranking, representing 18% of the respondents.

Table 1: Characteristics of the participants (n=102)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	33	33.0
	Female	67	67.0
Age	18-28 years	4	4.0
	29-40 years	44	44.0
	41-50 years	27	27.0
	51-65 years	25	25.0
Level of education	Matric	17	17.0
	Diploma	11	11.0
	Degree	47	47.0
	Master's/Professional qualification or higher	24	24.0
	PhD	1	1.0
Tenure with organisation	0-5 years	36	36.0
	6-10 years	25	25.0
	11-15 years	18	18.0
	16+ years	21	21.0

4.4 Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Coefficients, and Correlations

A statistical consultant carried out the analysis using IBM SPSS v 28 (IBM Corporation, 2023) and Mplus 8.10 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2023). Table 2 below presents the factor correlations, reliability coefficients, and descriptive statistics. The maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors (MLR) estimator takes into account kurtosis and skewness (Byrne, 2012).

The interpretation of statistical significance was at a value of 95% ($p < 0.05$) or 99% ($p < 0.01$) (Cohen, 1988), with the cut-off values of .30 (medium effect) and .50 (significant effect) used to determine the effect sizes of significant correlations.

Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega, both with cut-off values of .70, were used as indicators of reliability (Cohen, 1988; Hayes, 2020; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The means of the factors were reported on a 3-point scale (Disagree, Not Sure, Agree). Job

embeddedness – fit showed the highest mean and TI the lowest. The standard deviations for all five factors were acceptable and well below 1.00, indicating that the participant's responses were closely distributed around the respective means.

Of the three job embeddedness factors, only job embeddedness-fit had an alpha reliability coefficient above .70. Even though the overall alpha internal consistency for job embeddedness was measured at .75, the two factors' (links and sacrifices) did not show acceptable reliability values (.52 and .68, respectively). Work engagement's alpha reliability coefficient was just below the cut-off value at .69. Turnover intention was high at .87. Regarding omega reliability coefficients, overall job embeddedness, Job embeddedness – fit, and TI showed acceptable levels above .70. The omega for links could not be calculated, as it consisted of only two items and sacrifices' omega was measured just below .70. The omega reliability coefficient for work engagement was calculated at 1.19 due to negative residual variances.

Job embeddedness-fit was found to have significant positive relationships with job embeddedness–sacrifices and work engagement, both with significant effects ($r = .67^{**}$ and $r = .73^{**}$, respectively). Fit also showed a significant negative relationship with a large effect on TI ($r = -.63^{**}$). Job embeddedness – sacrifices had a significant positive relationship with work engagement ($r = .61^{**}$) and a significant negative relationship with TI ($r = -.65^{**}$), both with a significant effect. The relationship between work engagement and TI was found to be significant and negative, with a large effect ($r = -.66^{**}$). Of the latent variables, job embeddedness–links was the only one to show no significant relationship with any of the other latent variables. When correlated with demographic variables, only education had a significant positive relationship with TI ($r = .25^*$), albeit with a small effect.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics, reliability coefficients, and correlations

Variable	M	SD	α	Ω	1	2	3	4	5
Age					0.00	0.03	0.13	0.09	-0.14
Education					-0.15	0.06	-0.20	-0.11	0.25*
Tenure					0.07	0.21	-0.06	-0.16	0.10
Job embeddedness			0.75	0.73					
1. Fit	2.53	0.61	0.79	0.79	-				
2. Links	1.84	0.74	0.52	-	0.30	-			
3. Sacrifices	2.25	0.65	0.68	0.69	0.67‡**	0.33	-		
4. Work engagement	2.23	0.49	0.69	1.19	0.73‡**	0.13	0.61‡**	-	
5. Turnover intention	1.78	0.77	0.87	0.87	-0.63‡**	0.04	0.65‡**	0.66‡**	-

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

† $r > 0.30$; ‡ $r > 0.50$

4.4.1 Testing the measurement model

Table 3 hereunder presents the fit statistics of the final and competing measurement models. The proposed model consisted of the three factors of job embeddedness – fit, links, and sacrifices – as first-order latent variables and the two latent variables as work engagement and TI. Model fit was assessed using the following parameters: the absolute fit indices chi-square (χ^2), degrees of freedom (df), the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), the sample size adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion (ABIC), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The incremental fit indices included the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI). The CFI and TLI have a cut-off value of 0.90 for acceptable values. The RMSEA and SRMR values of 0.08 and lower indicate an acceptable fit (Byrne, 2012). Two competing models were specified to confirm the proposed model's superior fit. First, work engagement was broken down into three factors: vigour, dedication, and absorption. These were tested in a model together with fit, links, sacrifices, and TI (Model 2 in Table 3). The model had a non-positive definite latent variable covariance matrix, indicating problems with correlation(s) between latent variables or negative residual values. Second, job embeddedness and work engagement were both

specified as one-factor structures and added to a model with TI (Model 3 in Table 3). Of the three models tested, Model 1 was preferred, as it had a better fit than Model 3.

Table 3: Fit statistics of final and competing measurement models.

Model	AIC	ABIC	χ^2	df	MLR-adjusted χ^2	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Model 1	3508.44	3474.70	144.61	109	154.40	0.06	0.94	0.92	0.07
Model 2	Non-positive definite latent variable covariance matrix – results not trustworthy								
Model 3	3533.67	3503.50	178.28	116	193.32	0.07	0.89	0.87	0.08

AIC = Akaike Information Criterion; ABIC = Sample Size Adjusted Bayes Information Criterion; χ^2 = chi-square; df = degrees of freedom; MLR-adjusted χ^2 = Maximum Probability Robust adjusted χ^2 ; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Square Residual

4.4.2 Testing the structural model

The best-fitting measurement model was used to specify models to test regression pathways. Three structural models were specified: one including all pathways; one including only direct pathways to the dependent variable; and one with only indirect pathways. The results are reported hereunder in Table 4.

Table 4: Initial framework fit indices and standardised path coefficients.

Measures		Direct and indirect pathways	Direct pathways only (Model 2)	Indirect pathways only (Model 3)
Fit indices	AIC	3508.44	Non-positive definite latent variable covariance matrix - results not trustworthy	3514.41
	ABIC	3474.70		3482.34
	χ^2	144.61		153.99
	df	109		112
	MLR-adjusted χ^2	154.40		166.37
	RMSEA	0.06		0.06
	CFI	0.94		0.93
	TLI	0.92		0.91
	SRMR	0.07		0.08
Direct pathways to turnover intention	Work engagement	-0.28		-0.70**
	Job embeddedness - Fit	-0.21		-
	Job embeddedness - Links	0.19		-
	Job embeddedness - Sacrifices	-0.41*		-
Direct pathways to work engagement	Job embeddedness - Fit	0.61**		0.64**
	Job embeddedness - Links	-0.13		-0.21
	Job embeddedness - Sacrifices	0.25		0.30

* p < 0.05

** p < 0.01

The first structural model (including all regression pathways) showed the best fit to the data. The second model again indicated a non-positive definite latent variable covariance matrix. Although the third model showed an acceptable fit, it was slightly lower than that of the first structural model. The statistics above show that in Model 1, job embeddedness-sacrifice significantly precedes TI at -0.41*; thus, elevated levels of job embeddedness-sacrifice have the impact of reducing TI. Furthermore, in model 1, job embeddedness-fit was found to

influence work engagement strongly and positively at 0.61**. None of the other latent variables were found to precede any other significantly.

4.4.3 The indirect effect of job embeddedness

Possible indirect effects on TI by the three factors of job embeddedness through work engagement were evaluated. In Table 5, job embeddedness-fit had a significant indirect effect on TI. Even though job embeddedness-fit did not significantly precede TI, if an employee experiences job embeddedness-fit and becomes more engaged in their work, fit can also lower TI indirectly.

Table 5: Indirect effects through work engagement on turnover intention.

Variable	Work engagement	
	Est.	95% BCCI
Job embeddedness - Fit	-0.44*	[-0.75, -0.07]
Job embeddedness - Links	0.14	[-0.03, 0.49]
Job embeddedness - Sacrifices	-0.21	[-0.74, 0.08]

BCCI = Bootstrap Corrected Confidence Interval

4.5 Discussion

The research study investigated the influence of job embeddedness on TI and the mediational role of work engagement. Although there have been several studies in this field, this research is unique in that it targets university support staff. To the researcher's knowledge, there has yet to be a study targeting this group. Most of the investigations that have been undertaken were targeted at academic staff. This research study had four clear objectives, as discussed below. Moreover, the research results contribute to the existing literature on this subject matter and can be used as a guide for future related studies.

Objective 1: Determine the perceived levels of job embeddedness, work engagement, and turnover intentions among support staff employees at a selected institution of higher learning in South Africa.

The means of the factors were reported on a 3-point scale (Disagree, Not Sure, Agree). The results showed that participants were highly embedded in both fit and sacrifice. This indicated the participants' elevated levels of embeddedness in their jobs and their institution as being driven by the excellent alignment to their roles and in terms of expectations of them. Furthermore, the fear of losing what the organisation offers and the relationships that have been built over time strengthened the embeddedness factor. Embeddedness - links within the organisation showed a moderate effect on embedding employees. The results further indicated elevated levels of work engagement amongst the participants. Participants indicated high levels of being absorbed and enjoying their work, as well as being dedicated and showing elevated levels of enthusiasm in performing their daily responsibilities.

On the other hand, the participants showed a low to moderate desire to leave. This is consistent with Takawira et al. (2014) and Shibiti et al. (2018), who found that elevated levels of embeddedness and work engagement have an effect of lowering the desire and intention to leave an organisation.

Objective 2: To determine the correlations between employee-perceived job embeddedness and work engagement.

The findings showed a strong positive relationship between work engagement and employees' perceived job embeddedness (fit and sacrifice). Although organisational links and work engagement are related, there was no significant relationship. The results suggest that employees who fit with their roles are positively engaged with their work. The results are consistent with Ringl (2013), who found that all job embeddedness dimensions were related to work engagement; however, fit and sacrifice were significantly correlated in predicting work engagement than organisational links. Moreover, Shibiti et al. (2018) found that workers who exhibit elevated levels of passion, vigour, and cognitive agility while carrying out their regular duties are likely to be more engaged in their jobs.

Individuals who feel that their roles and duties are in sync with their skills, competencies and what is expected of them tend to find meaning and a sense of purpose in what they do, and this directly drives their commitment to work. In most instances, these individuals are immersed in what they are doing; they enjoy going to work, and throughout the day, they are engaged with what they are doing and have positive energy to sustain their work activities.

Similarly, employees who would have to sacrifice a lot if they were to leave the organisation also appear to be highly engaged in their work. This shows that once there is a good fit between an employee and their job, and they have a lot to sacrifice should they leave; it becomes easier to be positively engaged in one's work. This is aligned with Khan et al.'s (2018) findings that established that hotel industry workers with high levels of embeddedness are involved in and linked to existing projects, they find value in and have good relationships with colleagues; these workers experience a good fit to their jobs as they are competent, have a sense of purpose, and would sacrifice a lot of what they value if they quit.

Objective 3: To determine the relationship between employee-perceived job embeddedness and turnover intentions.

With reference to this research study, the relationship between job embeddedness and TI was found to be negatively correlated with all job embeddedness dimensions, with organisational fit and organisational sacrifice proving to have a significant impact on lowering TI. This supports the idea that the employee who experiences alignment of their values and the values of the organisation and whose skills, knowledge, and abilities are related to their job is likely to be content with their employer, and they seldom think of leaving. Similarly with organisational sacrifice, according to the Conservation of Resources Theory, 'individuals are motivated to invest personal resources to protect valued resources such as important and prized aspects of one's job' (Hobfoll, 2018). When workers are engaged with their jobs and the organisation, they are less likely to consider quitting (Holton et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2004; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Takawira et al., 2014). Employees who are deeply connected to their jobs and organisations are less likely to want to leave their employment because they have strong links and connections to their workplace. Employees feel a good fit between their personal and professional objectives with the institution and, therefore, feel valued and have a sense of purpose. However, even if they are tempted to leave, the perceived prohibitive costs of leaving act as a deterrent. These prohibitive costs may take the form of the following perceived losses: position of influence; an existing project of sentimental value; a good environment; excellent social and work relationships; as well as other perceived organisational benefits. Organisations can utilise this understanding to develop strategies aimed at increasing job embeddedness, as this has a direct impact on reducing TI and, thereby, ultimately lowering turnover rates. These strategies may include fostering a positive work environment, embedding flexible work conditions, improving employees' work-life balance, and promoting a sense of family within the organisation.

Objective 4: To establish the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between job embeddedness and turnover intentions.

The study found an indirect positive effect of job embeddedness (fit and links) through work engagement on reducing TI, with fit having a significant indirect effect. Takawira et al. (2014) found that elevated levels of embeddedness (links) and elevated levels of productivity of lecturers employed in the higher educational institutions were positively related to reducing TI. Job embeddedness reflects an employee's deep connection to their job and organisation, which can lead to increased work engagement. Engaged employees tend to exhibit higher levels of work-related enthusiasm, dedication, and fulfilment, making them less inclined to consider leaving their current employment. Understanding the mediating relationship highlights the significance of nurturing and fostering work engagement together with job embeddedness as a broader strategy to reduce TI and retain valuable employees. When employees are deeply embedded in their jobs and organisations, they are more likely to be engaged, and this work engagement, in turn, reduces their TI. Khan et al.'s (2018) studies targeting hotel employees concluded that embedded employees demonstrated increased work engagement and performance, resulting in lowered TIs; this suggests that management should improve its staff's job embeddedness and increase work engagement and performance to reduce TIs.

4.6 Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to present the information gathered from the research using online administered questionnaires, analyse it, and interpret the statistics. The response rate of the participants was 37%, and the underlying causes of the low response were discussed in detail. Frequencies data in terms of control variables was summarised. The study's objectives and results were presented through descriptive statistics in the form of tables and charts. The discussion of the general findings was analysed in line with the literature review, as documented in Chapter 2. Similarly, the results were also discussed in line with the guiding research objectives, as stated in Chapter 1. Data analysis used SPSS v 28 to determine relationships and reliability coefficients. The next chapter provides a high-level summary of results, implications of the study, its limitations, recommendations, and advice for future research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented an analysis of the data collected from participants using the research tools. It included a discussion and evaluation of the results in relation to the study objectives and the literature review.

This chapter provides a conclusion regarding the central insights gleaned from the results of the descriptive and other statistical analyses. The managerial implications and the practical takeaways derived from the study will be discussed in detail. The chapter highlights the study limitations that could have influenced the study, gaps, recommendations, and a guide for future studies to achieve more conclusive results.

5.2 Conclusion of the Study

The purpose of the research study was to investigate and find empirical evidence of the influence of job embeddedness on the intention to leave and the mediational role of work engagement at an educational institution within South Africa, focusing on support staff. The overarching finding of the research is that job embeddedness and work engagement are significantly correlated to reducing the intention to leave within the context of university support staff within the South African higher education context. These results are in agreement with Takawira et al.'s (2014) study that targeted academic staff in a higher education context. The primary premise is that highly embedded workers who are enthusiastic about what they do are less likely to think about leaving the organisation. Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) concluded that employees who are highly engaged and embedded tend to exhibit improved productivity and reduced intentions to leave the organisation; these findings indicate that not only do they discourage embedded and engaged employees from leaving the institution, but these employees perform much better. As a staff retention strategy, higher learning and related organisations should consider further strengthening strategies that enhance job embeddedness and work engagement as instruments of managing TI.

Therefore, it is suggested that the dimensions of both job embeddedness and work engagement are investigated in terms of developing them. In the case of organisation fit, the organisation needs to ensure that its recruitment processes are geared toward hiring

employees who are suitable for the role in terms of skill, knowledge, and experience. Similarly, Ringl (2013) states that organisations looking for dedicated workers should invest additional resources in their recruiting departments to develop processes that identify, recruit, and select candidates that possess the highest level of congruence between their core values and goals and the organisation's core values and objectives. In terms of existing employees, they can be repurposed according to their capabilities and areas of strength. Moreover, the organisation should strive to develop the essential and prized aspects of work, and these include a good working environment, a great culture, attractive remuneration, benefits, awards, recognition, prospects of guaranteed promotion, and functional teams. Referring to organisational links, although this aspect was negatively related to TI, the relationship was not significant. However, it can be argued that the structure of the selected questions could have caused this outcome. Organisational links remain an essential aspect in terms of job embeddedness. It is advisable to use the Job Embeddedness Scale (JES-18) rather than JES-9, which was used in this study, to provide detailed feedback that covers all standard job embeddedness questions.

Competition between different institutions and the global world for scarce skills is undisputed, especially with the advent of remote working. This is particularly relevant to university leadership and management, information technology specialists, and other specialists. Coetzee and Schreuder (2010) propose that the issues surrounding high employee turnover are exacerbated by external factors such as competition for talent and the availability of alternative jobs in the local or global economy. Therefore, job embeddedness and work engagement remain practical interventions to manage TI.

The results of the study also show that an employee's level of education and TI are significantly positively related. Therefore, the more qualified an employee is, the more likely they are to consider leaving the institution. When employees are more educated, more lucrative opportunities are available to them. More effort should be made to embed and ensure that such highly educated employees are fully engaged in their work. Other control variables, such as an employee's age and their tenure with the organisation, did not return any statistical relationship with other variables.

5.3 Managerial Implications

This study provides essential practical approaches for retention strategies within the higher education environment. The study confirmed that, indeed, higher levels of job embeddedness, with work engagement as a mediator, can directly reduce employees' TIs. It is recommended that the university administration enhance its employees' job embeddedness to decrease TIs and promote work engagement. This conclusion has been mentioned in other earlier studies (Takawira et al., 2014; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Mitchell et al., 2001b); however, based on the knowledge available to the researcher, a study had yet to be carried out targeting support staff employees or non-academic staff members of an educational institution of higher learning.

Based on this research, there is conclusive evidence that formulating and strengthening job embeddedness along with work engagement has a significant impact on reducing employees' TIs. Human resource management and leadership, in general, need to interrogate the finer details of what drives job embeddedness and what aspects drive work engagement. It is paramount to understand that the intricacies of job embeddedness and work engagement differ per job level, and thus, a one-size-fits-all strategy cannot be applied. Organisations have a crucial role to play in nurturing employee work engagement (Pandita & Singhal 2017:40), and they have the potential to take proactive measures to promote job embeddedness. This can be achieved by strengthening the connections between employees and their roles through activities such as teamwork and long-term projects. Furthermore, organisations can harness the employee's sense of sacrifice by linking job and organisational rewards to the employee's commitment and loyalty. Additionally, ensuring a good fit between an employee's skills, core competencies, abilities, and mindset with the job expectations can enhance job embeddedness.

To enhance work engagement, organisations can provide meaningful work activities, involve middle-level staff in decision-making processes, offer flexible working conditions, create opportunities for personal and professional growth, and implement incentive-linked compensation.

The study results are significant against the backdrop of the COVID-19 disruption and the subsequent introduction of hybrid working environments, which have questioned whether traditional job embedding dimensions are still relevant in this modern day. The study was carried out at an institution that has practised a hybrid working environment since COVID-19; for most roles, physical presence is not required.

One of this study's objectives was to add more knowledge and fresh insights regarding the effects of work embeddedness and work engagement on TI above what is already available.

5.4 Limitations

The self-reported questionnaires in this study were based on a cross-sectional design because the data was gathered at a single point in time (De Vos et al., 2011). The mediational effect of work engagement was limited to an indirect effect, as data was collected at a single point.

The Voluntary Turnover Scale had a limited number of items/questions, only three items. This presented a challenge from a statistical perspective due to the difficulty in determining whether the variable had been measured accurately. Similarly, work engagement should utilise the UWES-17) rather than UWES-9 to allow for dividing the factor into three dimensions, which are absorption, dedication, and vigour, without compromising the statistics' reliability.

The study employed convenience sampling, and consequently, this study's outcomes should not be generalised to the broader population or different occupational contexts because not all of the population's characteristics were represented in the research sample.

Notwithstanding the highlighted drawbacks, the study does add to our understanding of the connection between job embeddedness and intention to leave, with work engagement having a secondary effect. Although there have been similar studies, this study is unique as it focused on the non-academic employees of an institution of higher learning.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

The following are recommendations that could assist future researchers in conducting studies that would yield conclusive results.

It would be wise for a researcher to ensure a wide pool of participants. Researchers should develop mechanisms to encourage and motivate the target population so that they participate in the study. Alternatively, the study should also involve several institutions to avoid getting a narrow perspective that might only be applicable to one particular institution.

It is essential to ensure that each dimension has at least three questions to assist with statistical analysis. For instance, omega can only be calculated for a dimension with at least

three questions/items. In the case of the job embeddedness questions, it is advisable to use JES-18 rather than JES-9 to avoid skewness of statistics, which might compromise the results. Data was collected through the quantitative method of structured online questionnaires. Structured questions are prone to bias, as they lead participants to respond in a particular way, which is construed as socially correct. In some cases, participants misinterpret the questions, resulting in incorrect answers. Therefore, future studies should consider qualitative research with open-ended questions, as this would allow researchers to monitor respondents' reactions and make follow-up questions in cases where questions have been incorrectly interpreted, resulting in a better understanding of these factors.

Future research should be designed to target particular roles and functions that are susceptible to high labour turnover. Currently, professionals in senior management roles, research specialists, IT-related positions, senior finance roles, and senior human resources roles are vulnerable to high employee turnover, unlike other administration roles, which comprise the majority of non-academic staff. A study focussing on these professionals could be beneficial to determine variables necessary for retaining highly qualified and talented staff.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter represents the study's conclusion. It presented the study's limitations, implications, and recommendations for future studies. This study adds to the growing body of literature supporting the hypothesis that job embeddedness and work engagement can reduce TIs.

In summary, the research established that job embeddedness (fit and sacrifice) is negatively related to TIs. Furthermore, the research further confirmed that job engagement has an indirect effect through job embeddedness - fit. These results concur with Takawira et al. (2014) and Mitchell et al.'s (2001b) findings, which posit that individuals who are significantly invested in their work are less likely to consider or think about quitting their current job. Similarly, employees who exhibit elevated levels of engagement take pleasure in their jobs and have a great attachment to the institution, which has the direct effect of lowering their need to leave the organisation.

Therefore, workers who are deeply committed to their jobs by having roles that match their expectations and capabilities are more likely to exhibit strong levels of focus, pride, commitment, and mental vigour when executing their day-to-day responsibilities. Such

conditions have a direct effect on lower job intentions. Employers who desire to retain their employees should further strengthen and cultivate a working environment that encourages employees to be immersed in and committed to their work and their working environment.

The study adds to the body of knowledge already available in the field of staff retention strategies to both scholars in their studies and organisations in their human resources management. The uniqueness of this study was that it targeted non-academic employees of educational institutions and investigated the mediating role of work engagement on embeddedness and TI.

REFERENCES

- Abbas, M., Raja, U., Darr, W., & Bouckennooghe, D. (2014). 'Combined effects of perceived politics and psychological capital on job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and performance'. *J Manage*, 40:1813-1830.
- Adhitiawan, E. (2014). 'Adverse effects of high HR turnover rates'. Available at: <http://www.refinedanalyticsindonesia.com/blog/damp-bad-turnover-rate-high-turnover-rate-HR> [Accessed: Jul 2023].
- Alexandrov, A., Babakus, E., & Yavas, U. (2007). 'The effects of perceived management concern for frontline employees and customers on turnover intentions: The moderating role of employment status'. *Journal of Service Research*, 9:356–371.
- Allen, D. G. (2006). Do organizational socialization tactics influence newcomer embeddedness and turnover? *Journal of management*, 32(2), 237-256.
- Allen, D.G., & Shannock, L.R. (2012). 'Perceived organisational support and embeddedness as fundamental mechanisms connecting socialisation tactics to commitment and turnover among new employees'. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1805>
- Ampofo, E.T. (2020). 'Mediation effects of job satisfaction and work engagement on the relationship between organisational embeddedness and affective commitment among frontline employees of star-rated hotels in Accra'. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 44:253–262. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.06.002> [Accessed: 30 Jun 2023].
- Bakker, A.B., & Bal, P.M. (2010). 'Weekly work engagement and performance: A study among starting teachers'. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 83(1):189–206.
- Bakker, A.B. & Demerouti, E. (2008). 'Towards a model of work engagement'. *Career Development International*, 13(3):209-223.
- Bakker, A.B., Schaufeli, W.B., Leiter, M.P., & Taris, T.W. (2008). 'Work engagement: An emerging concept in occupational health'. *Work and Stress*, 22:187–200. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02678370802393649>. [Accessed: 22 Jan 2023].
- Bargagliotti LA. (2012). Work engagement in nursing: a concept analysis. *J Adv Nurs*. ;68(6):1414–28

- Barkhuizen, N., Lesenyeho, D., & Schutte, N. (2020). 'Talent retention of academic staff in South African higher education institutions'. *International Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 12(1):191-207.
- Bashir, N. (2017). 'Impact of customer relationship management on customer retention'. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 6(8):293–305.
- Bettany-Saltikov, J. & Whittaker, V.J. (2013). 'Selecting the most appropriate inferential statistical test for your quantitative research study'. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 23:1520-1531. Available at: <http://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.12343>
- Blaikie, N. & Priest, J. (2019). *Designing social research: The logic of anticipation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Bothma, C., & Roodt, G. (2013). The validation of the turnover intention scale. *SA journal of human resource management*, 11(1), 1–12. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v11i1.507>
- Byrne, B.M. (2012). *Structural equation modelling with Mplus: Basic concepts, applications, and programming*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. Available at: doi:10.5153/sro.2277
- Callado A, Teixeira G, Lucas P. (2023). Turnover Intention and Organizational Commitment of Primary Healthcare Nurses. *Healthcare (Basel)*. Feb 10;11(4):521. doi: 10.3390/healthcare11040521. PMID: 36833055; PMCID: PMC9957010.
- Coetzee, M. & Schreuder, A.M.G. (2010). *Personnel psychology: an applied perspective*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioural sciences*. 2nd edn. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Collis, J., & Hussey, R. (2014). *Business research*. 4th edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Crossley, C. D., Bennett, R.J., Jex, S.M., & Burnfield, J.L. (2007). 'Development of a global measure of job embeddedness and integration into a traditional model of voluntary turnover'. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(4):1031.
- Darrat, M.A., Amyx, D.A., & Bennett, R.J. (2017). 'Examining the impact of job embeddedness on salesperson deviance: The moderating role of job satisfaction'. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 63:158–166.
- Dawley, D.D. & Andrews, M.C. (2012). 'Staying Put: Off-the-job embeddedness as a moderator of the relationship between on-the-job embeddedness and turnover intentions'. *Journal of Leadership and Organisational Studies*, 20(10):1–9.

- De Bruin, G.P., & Henn, C.M. (2013). Dimensionality of the 9-item Utrecht work engagement scale (UWES-9). *Psychological Reports*, 112(3):788-799. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1539/joh.15-0057-OA>
- De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B., & Delport, C.S. (2014). *Research at the grassroots: For social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik, p. 148.
- Denscombe, M. (2014). *The Good Research Guide*. 5th edn. Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.
- Diedericks, E. & Rothmann, S. (2014). 'Flourishing of information technology professionals: Effects on individual and organisational outcomes'. *South African Journal of Business Management*, 45(1):27-41.
- Du Plessis, M., Grobler, A., & Erasmus, B. (2015). 'Employee retention in a higher education institution: an organisational development perspective'. Available at: <10.13140/RG.2.1.4474.5049>. [Accessed: 25 Jan 2023].
- Du Plooy, J. & Roodt, G. (2010). 'Work engagement, burnout, and related constructs as predictors of turnover intention'. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 36(1):1-13.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S.A., & Alkassim, R.S. (2016). 'Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling'. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1):1-4.
- Friedman, R.A. & Holtom, B. (2002). 'The effect of network groups on minority employee turnover intentions'. *Human Resource Management*, 41(4):405-421. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/hrm.10051> [Accessed: 20 Jan 2023].
- Gabriel, D. (2013). 'Inductive and Deductive Approaches to Research'. Available at: <https://deborahgabriel.com/2013/03/17/inductive-and-deductive-approaches-to-research/> [Accessed: 07 Aug 2022].
- Goertzen, M.J. (2017). 'Applying quantitative methods to e-Book Collections'. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5860/ltr.53n4>
- Graham, C. (2012). 'Transforming spaces and identities: The contributions of professional staff to learning spaces in higher education'. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 34(4):437-452.
- Griffeth, R.W., Horn, P.W., & Gaertner, S. (2000). 'Meta-analysis of antecedents and correlates of employee turnover: Update, moderator tests, and research implications for the next millennium'. *Journal of Management*, 26(3):463-488.
- Gutermann, D., Lehmann-Willenbrock, N., Boer, D., Born, M., & Voelpel, S. C. (2017). 'How leaders affect followers' work engagement and performance: Integrating leader-

- member exchange and crossover theory'. *British Journal of Management*, 28(2):299-314.
- Halbesleben, J.R.B. & Wheeler, A.R. (2008). 'The relative roles of engagement and embeddedness in predicting job performance and intentions to leave'. *Work & Stress*, 22(3):242–256. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02678370802383962> [Accessed: 21 Jan 2023].
- Halfpenny, P. (2014). *Positivism and sociology (RLE Social Theory): Explaining social life*. Routledge.
- Harman, W.S., Blum, M., Stefani, J., & Taho, A. (2009). 'Albanian turnover: Is the job embeddedness construct predictive in an Albanian context?' *Journal of Behavioural and Applied Management*, Vol. 10(2):192-205.
- Harter, J.K., Schmidt, F.L., & Hayes, T.L. (2002). 'Business-unit level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: A meta-analysis'. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(2):268–279. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.2.268>
- Hayes, A.F. (2020). 'Use Omega rather than Cronbach's Alpha for estimating reliability. But...'. *Communication Methods and Measures*, 14(1):1–24. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19312458.2020.1718629> [Accessed: 14 Oct 2023].
- Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2015). Validity and reliability in quantitative studies. *Evidence-based nursing*, 18(3), 66-67.
- Hobfoll, S. E., Halbesleben, J., Neveu, J. P., & Westman, M. (2018). Conservation of resources in the organizational context: The reality of resources and their consequences. *Annual review of organizational psychology and organizational behavior*, 5, 103-128.
- Holtom, B.C., Mitchell, T.R., Lee, T.W., & Eberly, M.B. (2008). 'Turnover and retention research: A Glance at the Past, a Closer Review of the Present, and a Venture into the Future'. *Acad Manag Ann.*, 2:231-274.
- Hom, P.W., Allen, D.G., & Griffeth, R. W. (2020). *Employee retention and turnover: Why employees stay or leave*. Routledge.
- IBM Corporation. (2023). *IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows*. Version 28.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corporation.
- Jia, J., Yan, J., Jahanshahi, A.A., Lin, W., & Bhattacharjee, A. (2020). 'What makes employees more proactive? Roles of job embeddedness, the perceived strength of the HRM system and empowering leadership'. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*,

- 58(1):107–127. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1744-7941.12249> [Accessed: 21 Jan 2023].
- Khan, M., Aziz, S., Afsar, B., & Latif, A., (2018). 'The effect of job embeddedness on turnover intentions, work engagement, and job performance'. *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality*, 7(3):1-9.
- Karatepe, O.M. & Ngeche, R.N. (2012). 'Does job embeddedness mediate the effect of work engagement? A study of hotel employees in Cameroon'. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 21(94):440-461. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2012.626730>
- Karatepe, O.M. & Shahriari, S. (2014). 'Job embeddedness as a moderator of the impact of organisational justice on turnover intentions: A study in Iran'. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* 16:22–32.
- Kothari, C.R. (2004). 'Research methodology: Methods and techniques'. New Age International:52-56.
- Kristianto, P. (2009). 'Indonesian oil and gas mailing list: (oil & gas) Am I wrong?' Available at: https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Migas_Indonesia/conversations/messages/87287 [Accessed: 21 Jul 2023].
- Kujik, A. (2018). 'Two-factor theory by Frederick Herzberg'. Available at: <https://www.toolshero.com/psychology/theories-of-motivation/two-factor-theory-herzberg/> [Accessed: 27 Jun 2022].
- Lawler, E.E. & Finegold, D. (2000). 'Individualising the organisation: Past, present, and future'. *Organisational Dynamics*, 29(1):1–15. Available at: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0090-2616\(00\)00009-7](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0090-2616(00)00009-7) [Accessed: 21 Jan 2023].
- Lazzari, M., Alvarez, J. M., & Ruggieri, S. (2022). Predicting and explaining employee turnover intention. *International Journal of Data Science and Analytics*, 14(3), 279-292
- Lee, T.W., Mitchell, T.R., Sablinski, C.J., Burton, J.P., & Holtom, B. (2004). 'The effects of job embeddedness on organisational citizenship, job performance, volitional absences, and voluntary turnover'. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47:711–722. Available at: <https://journals.aom.org/doi/abs/10.5465/20159613> [Accessed: 20 Jan 2023].
- Lim, G.M. & Wong, S.F. (2009). 'Understanding retention of IT professionals in vendor organisations. A job embeddedness model'. *Journal of Outsourcing and Information Management*, 1(20):12–17.
- Mathis, R.L. & Jackson, J.H. (2006). *Human Resource Management*. 10th edn. Jakarta: Prentice Hall.

- Matsheng, P. (2020). 'Real cost of labour turnover'. *PWC HR Quarterly*:11.
- May, D.R., Gilson, R.L., & Harter, L.M. (2004). 'The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety, and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work'. *Journal of Occupational Organisational Psychology*, 77(1):11-37.
- McDougall, J. (2018). 'What is employee retention, and what factors contribute to it?' Available at: <https://business.dailypay.com/blog/employee-retention> [Accessed: 10 Jul 2022].
- Melnikovas, A. (2018). 'Toward an Explicit Research Methodology: Adopting Research Onion Model for Futures Studies'. *Journal of Futures Studies*, 23(2):34. Available at: [DOI:10.6531/JFS.201812_23\(2\).0003](https://doi.org/10.6531/JFS.201812_23(2).0003)
- Michaels, E.D., Handfield-Jones, H., & Axelrod, B. (2001). *The war for talent*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Press.
- Midgley, M. (2016). 'An explanatory, quantitative study to understand the behaviour of low-income household's online shopping behaviour'. *Consumer Behavior Review*, 6(1):251162. Available at: DOI:[10.51359/2526-7884.2022.251162](https://doi.org/10.51359/2526-7884.2022.251162)
- Mitchell, T.R., Holtom, B., & Lee, T.W. (2001a). 'How to keep your best employees: Developing an effective retention policy'. *Academy of Management Executive*, 15(4):96–109.
- Mitchell, T.R., Holton, B.C., Lee, T.W., Sablinski, C.J., & Erez, M. (2001b). 'Why people stay: Using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover'. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4):1022-1121
- Morrell, K., Loan-Clarke, J., & Wilkinson, A. (2004). 'The role of shocks in employee turnover'. *British Journal of Management*, 15:335–349. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2004.00423.x> [Accessed: 10 Jul 2023].
- Muthén, L.K. & Muthén, B.O. (1998-2023). *Mplus user's guide*. 8th edn. Los Angeles, CA: Muthén & Muthén.
- Nassaji, H. (2015). 'Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis'. *Language Teaching Research*, 19:129–132. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168815572747> [Accessed: 10 Jul 2023].
- Netswera, F.G., Rankumise, E.M., & Mavundla, T.R. (2006). 'Employee retention factors for South African Higher Education Institutions: A case study'. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*, 3(2):36-40.
- Ng, T.W. & Feldman, D.C. (2010). 'The impact of job embeddedness on innovation-related behaviours'. *Human Resource Management*, 49(6):1067-1087.

- Nulty, D.D. (2008). 'The adequacy of response rates to online and paper surveys: What can be done?' *Assessment & evaluation in higher education*, 33(3):301–314.
- Nunnally, J.C. & Bernstein, I.H. (1994). *Psychometric theory*. 3rd edn. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Pandita, S. & Singhal, R. (2017). 'The influence of employee engagement on the work-life balance of employees in the IT sector'. *The IUP Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 16:38-57.
- Park, J. & Park, M. (2016). 'Qualitative versus quantitative research methods: Discovery or justification?' *Journal of Marketing Thought*, 3(1):1-7.
- Pérez, I.A, Rapiman, M.E., Orellana, M.C., & Castro, A. L. (2017). 'Seven ethical requirements for Quantitative and Qualitative Research in Nursing: Experiences of three Research Ethics Committees from Santiago'. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*:23.
- Platow, M.J., Huo, Y.J., Lim, L., Tapper, H., & Tyler, T.R. (2015). 'Social identification predicts desires and expectations for voice'. *Social Justice Research*: 28, 526–549. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-015-0254-6> [Accessed: 14 Jul 2023].
- Ponnu, C.H. & Chuah, C.C. (2010). 'Organisational commitment, organisational justice, and employee turnover in Malaysia'. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(13):2676-2692.
- Radjasa, S. (2012). 'Hidden costs of employee turnover'. Available at: <http://www.portalhr.com/komunitas/opini/hidden-cost-of-employee-turnover/> [Accessed: 15 Jul 2023].
- Ratnawati, A., Sudarti, K., Mulyana, M., & Mubarak, M. H. (2020). Job embeddedness: A strategy to reduce voluntary turnover intention. *JDM (Jurnal Dinamika Manajemen)*, 11(2), 271-282.
- Ringl, R. W. (2013). The relationship between job embeddedness and work engagement (Order No. 1547136). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1460284753). <https://nwulib.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/relationship-between-job-embeddedness-work/docview/1460284753/se-2> [Accessed: 15 Jul 2023].
- Robyn, A.M. (2012). 'Intention to quit amongst Generation Y academics at higher education institutions'. MCom thesis. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University, p. 1.

- Schaufeli, W.B. (2017). 'General engagement: Conceptualisation and measurement with the Utrecht General Engagement Scale (UGES)'. *Journal of Well-Being Assessment*, 1(3):9–24.
- Schaufeli, W.B. & Bakker, A.B. (2004a). *Utrecht work engagement scale: Preliminary manual*. Utrecht: Occupational Health Psychology Unit Utrecht University.
- Schaufeli, W.B. & Bakker, A.B. (2004b). 'Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study'. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 25:293-315. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/job.248> [Accessed: 21 Jan 2023].
- Schaufeli, W.B., Salanova, M., Gonzalez-Rom, V., & Bakker, A.B. (2002). 'The measurement of engagement and burnout: A confirmative analytic approach'. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3,:71–92.
- Schlechter, A.F., Syce, C., & Bussin, M. (2016). 'Predicting voluntary turnover in employees using demographic characteristics: A South African case study'. *Acta Commercial*, 16(1):1-10.
- Sekaran, U. (2003). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach*. 4th edn. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd..
- Setia, M.S. (2016). 'Methodology series module 3: Cross-sectional studies'. *Indian Journal of Dermatology*, 61(3):261.
- Shibiti, R., Mitonga-Monga, J., & Lerotholi, M.Y. (2018). 'Perceived job embeddedness about work engagement in Tshwane Municipality public schools'. *Journal of Contemporary Management*, 15(1):78–99.
- Simons, H. (2009). 'Case Study research in practice'. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446268322> [Accessed: 10 Aug 2022].
- Singh, A.S. & Masuku, M. (2014). 'Sampling technique and determination of sample size in applied statistics research: an overview'. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce, and Management*, II(II):1-22.
- Singh, J.K. & Jain, M. (2013). 'A Study of Employee Job Satisfaction and its Impact on their performance'. *Journal of Indian Research*, 1(4).
- Sjöberg, A. & Sverke, M. (2000). 'The interactive effect of job involvement and organisational commitment on job turnover revisited: A note on the mediating role of turnover intention'. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 3:247–252. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9450.00194> [Accessed: 15 Dec 2022].

- Smyth, R., Zhai, Q., & Li, X. (2009). 'Determinants of turnover intentions among Chinese off-farm migrants'. *Econ Change Restruct*, 42:189-209.
- Snyman, A., (2021). 'Turnover is high in South Africa's higher education sector: What could turn the tide?' Available at: <https://theconversation.com/turnover-is-high-in-south-africas-higher-education-sector-what-could-turn-the-tide-167564> [Accessed: 20 Jan 2023].
- SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). (2021). Statistical Programs for the Social Sciences (SPSS): Version 28.0. SPSS Inc.
- Steyn, H.S. (2002). 'Practically Significant Relationships between two variables'. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 28(3):10–15.
- Struwig, F.W. & Stead, G.B. (2003). 'Research: Planning, designing, and reporting'. 2nd edn. South Africa: Pearson.
- Takawira, N., Coetzee, M., & Schreuder, D. (2014). 'Job embeddedness, work engagement and turnover intention of staff in a higher education institution: An exploratory study'. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12(1):1-10. Available at: [doi:10.4102/sajhrm.v12i1.524](https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v12i1.524) [Accessed: 20 Jan. 2023].
- Tanova, C. & Holtom, B.C. (2008). 'Using job embeddedness factors to explain voluntary turnover in four European countries'. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19:1553–1568.
- Timans, R., Wouters, P., & Heilbron, J. (2019). 'Mixed methods research: What it is and what it could be'. *Theory and Society*, 48(2):193–216. Available at: <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-019-09345-5>
- Van den Berg, B.A.M., Bakker, A.B., & Ten Cate, T.J. (2013). 'Key factors in work engagement and job motivation of teaching faculty at a university medical centre'. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 2(5-6):264–275. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s40037-013-0080-1> [Accessed: 20 Oct 2022].
- Van Dyk, J., Coetzee, M., & Tebele, C. (2013). 'Organisational commitment and job embeddedness of service staff with critical and scarce skills'. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, 37(1):61-78.
- Vermooten, N., Boonzaier, B., & Kidd, M. (2019). 'Job crafting, proactive personality, and meaningful work: Implications for employee engagement and turnover intention'. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 45. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v45i0.1567> [Accessed: 15 Oct 2022].

- Violante, M.G. & Vezzetti, E. (2017). 'Kano qualitative vs. quantitative approaches: An assessment framework for products attributes analysis'. *Computers In Industry*, 86:15-25. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compind.2016.12.007> [Accessed: 20 Oct 2022].
- Wiid, J., & Diggines, C. (2013). *Marketing research* (2nd ed.). Juta.
- Yao, X., Lee, T.W., Mitchell, T.R., Burton, J.P. & Sablynski, C.S. (2004). 'Job embeddedness: Current research and future directions', In Griffeth, R. & Hom, P. (Eds), *Understanding Employee Retention and Turnover*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age.
- Yavas, U., Babakus, E. & Karatepe, O.M. (2008). 'Attitudinal and behavioural consequences of work-family conflict and family-work conflict: Does gender matter?' *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 19(1):7–31.
- Yu, J., Ariza-Montes, A., Giorgi, G., Lee, A., & Han, H. (2020). 'Sustainable Relationship Development between Hotel Company and Its Employees: Linking Job Embeddedness, Job Satisfaction, Self-Efficacy, Job Performance, Work Engagement, and Turnover'. *Sustainability*, 12:7168. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12177168> [Accessed: 25 Jan 2023].
- Zhang, L., Fan, C., Deng, Y., Lam, C. F., Hu, E., & Wang, L. (2019). 'Exploring the interpersonal determinants of job embeddedness and voluntary turnover: A conservation of resources perspective'. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 29(3):413–432. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12235> [Accessed: 18 Jul 2023].

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-484
Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

30 May 2023

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) on, 23/05/2023 the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby approves your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-REC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Investigating the influence of job embeddedness on turnover intention: the mediational role of work engagement																																
Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: N Khumalo																																
Student: F Chinqono (37199420)																																
<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">U</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">0</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">0</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">6</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">0</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">A</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Institution</td> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Study Number</td> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Year</td> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Status</td> </tr> </table>				N	W	U	-	0	0	6	0	4	-	2	3	-	A	4	Institution			Study Number					Year		Status			
N	W	U	-	0	0	6	0	4	-	2	3	-	A	4																		
Institution			Study Number					Year		Status																						
<u>Status:</u> S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation																																
Application Type:	Commencement date: 30/05/2023		Risk: Minimal																													
Expiry date: 30/05/2024																																
<p style="font-size: small; color: red;">Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.</p>																																

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

-

<p>General conditions:</p> <p><i>While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EMS-REC:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and</i> - <i>without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.</i> • <i>The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EMS-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.</i>
--

- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
 - n the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EMS-REC reserves the right to:*
 - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
 - *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
 - *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
 - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
 - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EMS-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
 - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
 - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*

The EMS-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Mark
Rathbone

Digitally signed by Mark Rathbone
DN: cn=Mark Rathbone, o=North-
West University, ou=Business
management,
email=mark.rathbone@nwu.ac.za,
c=ZA
Date: 2023.05.30 15:13:10 +02'00'

Prof Mark Rathbone
Chairperson: NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee

APPENDIX B: NWU GATEKEEPERS APPROVAL LETTER



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: +2718 299-1111/2222

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Research Data Gatekeeper Committee

NWU RDGC PERMISSION GRANTED LETTER

Based on the documentation provided by the researcher specified below, on **14-June-2023** the North-West University (NWU) Research Data Gatekeeper Committee (NWU-RDGC) hereby grants permission for the specific project (as indicated below) to be conducted at the NWU:

Project title Investigating the influence of job embeddedness on turnover intention: the mediational role of work engagement.

Project leader: Ms Ntseliseng Khumalo

Researcher/Project Team: Mr Farai Chingono

Ethics reference no: NWU-00604-23-A4

NWU RDGC reference no: NWU-GK-23-144

Specific Conditions:

1. The recruitment strategy

From the RDGC form it states that *"The email invitation outlining the cause and context of the study will be sent over email. The participants will receive an email containing a link to the survey and the informed consent form"*.

- Please provide further clarification on how the researcher intends to acquire these email addresses. It is important to note that email addresses are considered personal information. In order to comply with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), it is advised that the researcher advertises the study on various NWU online platforms to reach potential participants.

Approval date: 14-June-2023

Expiry date: 14-June-2024

General Conditions of Approval:

- The NWU-RDGC will not take the responsibility to recruit research participants or to gather data on behalf of the researcher. This committee can therefore not guarantee the participation of our relevant stakeholders.

- Any changes to the research protocol within the permission period (for a maximum of 1 year) must be communicated to the NWU-RDGC. Failure to do so will lead to withdrawal of the permission.
- The NWU-RDGC should be provided with a report or document in which the results of said project are disseminated.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemics the Committee would like to advise the researcher to practice the necessary caution and adhere to the National Covid-19 Guidelines when conducting research with participants.

Please note that under no circumstances will any personal information of possible research subjects be provided to the researcher by the NWU RDGC. The NWU complies with the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA) as well as the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPI). For an application to access such information please contact Ms Annamarie De Kock (018 285 2771) for the relevant enquiry form or more information on how the NWU complies with PAIA and POPI.

The NWU RDGC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the NWU RDGC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Prof Jeffrey Mphahlele



Chairperson NWU Research Data Gatekeeper Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\test 2.docm
13 November 2018

Current details: (22351930) M:\DSS\18533\Monitoring and Reporting Cluster\Ethics\Applications RDGC\Updated RDGC Permission Letter.docm
15 November 2018

File reference: 1.1.4.3

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant

This **Informed Consent Statement** serves to confirm the following information as it relates to the officially approved research project at the North-West University on **“Investigating the influence of job embeddedness on turnover intention: the mediational role of work engagement”**.

1. The sole purpose of this study is to obtain information from participants like yourself to understand your experience and view related to the research topic.
2. Participation is completely voluntary, and you may opt-out at any time. You may also decide not to answer specific questions.
3. The procedure to be followed is a quantitative research design, which entails a questionnaire.
4. Confidentiality of the data is guaranteed and only the combined results will be used for research and publication purposes. You are not required to write names or any personal identification.
5. The data gathered from the questionnaires will only be used for research purposes.
6. Please note that there are four classifying variables (age, gender, education level and length of employment) which will be used only to profile the respondents who partook in this study. Biographical data will be used to create a profile of participants.
7. Also note that this study does not have a correct or incorrect answer to any of the questions. This means that in comparing the profiles of respondents, there is no correct or incorrect behavioural profile.

Please indicate your consent

I hereby agree to participate in the above study and consent after YES NO
reading the above information. *Required

If you disagree or select “NO”, there will be no further communication with you regarding the research.

Thank you for your time.

The researcher.

APPENDIX D: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT



BUSINESS SCHOOL
BESIGHEIDSKOOL
SEKOLO SA KGWEBO

Questionnaire

Dear Participant

You are encouraged to participate, (**Note**) no consequences are attached for refusing to participate or to terminate once one commences.

The data you are going to provide will be grouped with some other participants and will not be identifiable with you or anyone respondent in this study.

Section A: Biographical Information

This section is a biographic section where we ask you, to add context to the results. No information gathered will be used to identify you, as your responses are completely anonymous. We only ask these questions to better understand the data.

1. Please indicate your gender

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to answer.

2. Please indicate your age group

- 18-28 years
- 29-40 years
- 41-50 years
- 51-65 years

3. Please indicate your highest level of education (select only one)

- Matric
- Diploma
- Degree
- Masters/Professional Qualification or higher
- PHD

4. What is the length of your employment with North-West University (NWU)?

- 0-5 years

- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16 or more years

Section B: Job Embeddedness

May you carefully read each statement and choose what suitably fits you, your feeling or your view towards what is being described by the statements.

1 Agree	2 Not sure	3 Disagree
--------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

This section requires your personal views on how you fit within the institution, link with colleagues and sacrifice for the organisation.

1	My job utilizes my skills and talents well	1	2	3
2	I feel I am a good match for this organization.	1	2	3
3	The management highly evaluates my ability.	1	2	3
4	My closest friends are in the organization	1	2	3
5	I participated in at least one informal group which includes my colleagues	1	2	3
6	I would sacrifice a lot if I left this job.	1	2	3
7	This university provides lots of well-being benefits to employees.	1	2	3
8	I am well compensated for my level of performance.	1	2	3
9	Working from home impacts my closeness to colleagues	1	2	3

Section C: Work Engagement

This section requires your personal views on how involved or engaged in your job and its requirements.

1 Agree	2 Not Sure	2 Disagree
--------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

10	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	1	2	3
11	I am always excited when doing my work.	1	2	3
12	Time moves too fast when I am at work	1	2	3

13	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.	1	2	3
14	I am always absorbed in my work and have no time to waste.	1	2	3
15	I take a lot of time positively thinking about my work.	1	2	3
16	I am always miles away from my job, thinking of my personal life.	1	2	3
17	I often lose concentration when doing my work.	1	2	3
18	I am less attentive when doing my work.	1	2	3

Section D: Turnover Intentions.

This section requires you to honestly show what you really feel about staying or quitting your job and organisation.

1	2	3
Agree	Not Sure	Disagree

19	I always think of getting another job elsewhere that aligns with my personal preference.	1	2	3
20	I always get frustrated every time the organisation fails to support my personal goals.	1	2	3
21	I am considering leaving my job.	1	2	3

Your time has been valued, thank you very much.

APPENDIX E: TURNITIN REPORT

37199420:CHINGONO_F_-_MINI DISSERTATION.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

19% SIMILARITY INDEX	18% INTERNET SOURCES	10% PUBLICATIONS	4% STUDENT PAPERS
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	3%
2	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	2%
3	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	1%
4	scholarworks.sjsu.edu Internet Source	1%
5	Submitted to North West University Student Paper	<1%
6	dspace.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
7	optentia.co.za Internet Source	<1%
8	www.researchgate.net Internet Source	<1%
9	scholarworks.waldenu.edu Internet Source	<1%

APPENDIX F: LANGUAGE EDITOR'S LETTER

Isabella Morris
writer and editor

Isabella Morris

isbellaza@hotmail.co.uk

+20 106 334 2397

14 November 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: CERTIFICATE OF EDITING – *Mr. F. Chingono* – *orcid.org 0000-0003-0021-1791*

I hereby advise that from 09 to 13 November 2023, I edited Mr. F. Chingono's mini-dissertation "*Investigating the Influence of Job Embeddedness on Turnover Intention: The Mediation Role of Work Engagement*", submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Business Administration at the North-West University

Please note that I have not had sight of the manuscript since editing, with Mr Chingono either accepting or rejecting suggested changes, as is usual after editing.

Should you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

M. I. MORRIS

Isabella Morris
M.A. (Wits)
Professional Editor