

JOB ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEES' INTENTION TO QUIT AMONG ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This research study investigated the effect of job engagement to employees' intention to quit among administrative personnel at the University of Fort Hare. The main objectives of this study were determining the effects of job engagement on employees' intention to quit, and providing results that would lead to a deeper understanding of the nature and extent of the relationship between job engagement and intention to quit. A survey method was adopted for this study. A questionnaire comprising of three sections: biographical information, ERI questionnaire for stress and turnover intention, was administered to non-academic support personnel of the University of Fort Hare in all three campuses namely Alice, Bhisho, and East London in South Africa. Simple random sampling was used to select the participants. The literature reviewed displayed a great need for managers to understand job engagement and its causes. The study yielded results that show that there are interrelationships amongst the two variables, and that job engagement is significantly related to employees' intention to quit.

Keywords: *Job Engagement, Vigour, Rigour, Dedication, Intention To Quit, Workplace, Higher Learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Work is part of our day to day living. At some point in our lives, we all have to work and earn a living. Once we start working, the possibility is that we will spend almost all the remaining years of our lives at work.

The workforce and workplace are increasingly a critical part of an organisation's ability to deliver on its goals (Ulrich, Brockbank, Johnson, Sandholtz, & Younger, 2008). However, certain factors within the organisation often interfere with the workers' abilities to assist the organisation achieve its goals. These factors could relate to stress, job engagement,

and others. According to Ramesar, Koortzen, and Oosthuizen (2009), throughout the world, three forces define our time. These are globalization, the information revolution, and the speed of change. Organisations have to survive in an environment characterized by increased competition, ongoing developments in organisations, a relentless drive for greater cost-effectiveness, tightly

controlled budgets and increased competitiveness in the workplace. These challenges to and changes to organisations can result in, among others, retrenchments, downsizing, multitasking and restructuring.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Higher education institutions worldwide are developing a disturbing imbalance with their environments. This is due to the fact that higher education institutions face an overload of demands but are somewhat under-equipped with response mechanisms or strategies (Rothman & Barkhuizen, 2008). This overload of demands with minimal response mechanisms often leads to high levels of stress among the employees of the institutions, often leading to employees leaving the institution or showing signs of wanting to leave the institution. Mostert, Rothmann, Mostert, and Nell (2008) raised a concern that organisational stress is often viewed as a problem of the individual, however, it should be viewed as a serious problem for the institution as a whole.

Can job engagement therefore influence the employee's intention to quit or not to quit even when employees experience high levels of stress? The study seeks to investigate the extent to which job engagement can influence the degree of intention to quit among the administrative personnel, at the University of Fort Hare in South Africa.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this study were to examine the role of job engagement to employees' intention to quit and to provide results that may lead to a deeper understanding of the nature and extent of the relationship between organisational stress and intention to quit. Hypotheses tested were as follows:

3.1. Hypothesis Tested

H_0 : Job engagement is not significantly negatively related to intention to quit.

H_2 : Job engagement is significantly negatively related to intention to quit.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Job engagement, as used in the present study, is a new concept that emerged from the work of Rich, Lepine and Crawford (2010). It seems that its effect on employees intention to quit has not been investigated in any research. This gap in previous research literature is a clear indication of a need for further research with regards to job engagement. The resulting knowledge will be of assistance to the managers at the University of Fort Hare, the administrative personnel, other institutions of higher learning, and South Africa in general.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, some brief definitions and explanations, and also distinctions amongst the two variables in the study are done to ensure better and adequate understanding of all these variables and how they relate to one another. These variables are intention to quit and job engagement. The relationship between each of these variables, with one another, has been interrogated to establish their effect on each other. Previous studies done in this area have also been consulted to gain a better insight of the study.

5.1. Intention To Quit Theories

5.1.1. The unfolding model of voluntary turnover (Greenberg, 2011)

Intention to quit is also termed turnover intention (Shields & Ward, 2001). One of the models that tend to shed more light on the nature of turnover and reasons leading to turnover intention is the Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover. This model explains the cognitive processes through which people make decisions about quitting or staying in their organisations.

The model explains that a decision to leave one's organisation is a huge one, and people often consider a number of factors before making such a big decision. According to this model, the employee's decision to quit or not to quit depends on two key factors – shock to the system and decision frames. Shock to the system can relate to an event that get the employee's attention and gets the employee to start thinking about their jobs, for example, a merger with another organisation. Decision frames relate to a set of rules and images on how to interpret something that has happened, for example, things that the employee believes in and as a result, might have an obvious response to a situation based on what has happened in the past (Greenberg, 2011).

The Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover depicts four possible decision paths that may result from the two factors mention above. The first decision path happens when a shock to the system, that matches an existing decision frame, occurs. For example, the organisation loses a huge account - if the employee's experience is that when big accounts are lost then jobs are lost, he/she might decide to quit before actually being laid off by the organisation. The second decision path happens when a shock to the system occurs but fails to match a decision frame, and there is no specific job alternative. An example in this case would be if the employee's organisation is taken over by another – this is a shock to the employee, however it is very difficult to make a decision whether to stay or not to stay, especially because there is no alternative job to take on. The uncertainty and fear might force the employee to leave even if they don't have another job to fall back on, but it will be a very difficult decision to make. The third decision path happens when a shock to the system occurs and it fails to match a decision frame, but there is a specific job alternative this time. An example once again is that the employee's organisation is taken over by another – as much as this is a shock to the employee, quitting or leaving the organisation might be made easier by the fact that there is another job to fall back

on. Decision path 4 happens when there is no shock to the system and therefore no decision time frame is considered. In this case, the employee leaves the organisation only if other conditions suggest that leaving is a good idea, for example, getting married to a rich spouse who can easily and willingly provide for the employee and people in his/her life (Greenberg, 2011).

Figure 1 below is a summary of the Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover, the figure shows all these decision paths in a less complex manner:

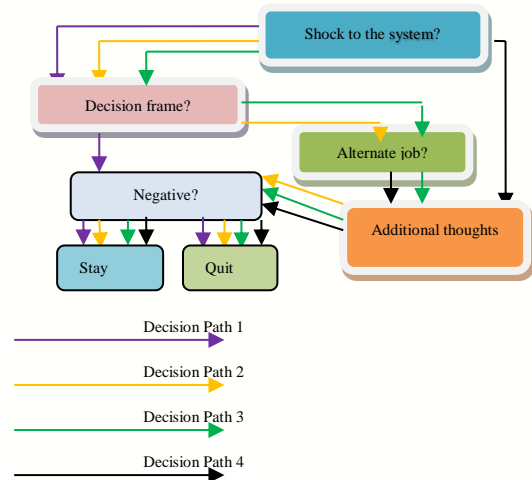


Figure 1: Voluntary turnover: the unfolding model (Greenberg, 2011)

5.2. Job engagement theories

Job engagement, also termed work engagement is relatively new and has only received popularity as a managerial and research concept in the last decade. There is still a lack of universal definition of the concept. Definitions of job engagement incorporate mental, emotional and behavioural factors or components (Sakovska, 2012; Meyer & Gagne, 2008; Kong, 2009). From these definition components, a couple of theories on job engagement are slowly emerging.

5.2.1. Kahn’s need satisfying approach

This model is based on Kahn’s approach that the cognitive aspect of employees’ engagement at work includes their beliefs about the organisation, management, and working conditions. Kahn believes that when an individual engages deeper in his or her role

at work, the individual both drives personal strengths or energies into role behaviours and demonstrates the self within that particular role (self-expression). The model explains that when the preferred self is expressed, the individual engages in task behaviours that build up connection to work and to others (Kahn, 1990).

5.2.2. Self-determination theory

This theory helps to explain work engagement together with psychological states and behavioural repercussions that can result from the absence of work engagement. This theory bases work engagement on two forms of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The theory explains that intrinsic motivation encourages task performance for its own sake out of the individual enjoyment and interest. Extrinsic motivation encourages task performance for instrumental reasons, however, extrinsic motivation is predominant in the work context. This theory explains that employees who are engaged in what they are doing experience better physical and psychological wellbeing than those employees who are less engaged (Meyer & Gagne, 2008).

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

6.1. Intention to quit

Different researchers and authors use different terms to describe quitting, such as turnover, attrition, exit, migration, succession, etc. Unlike the actual employee turnover or quitting, intention to quit is not explicit in that it is only statements about a specific behaviour of interest and not the actual behaviour (Berndt, 1981). Intention to quit can also be termed “turnover intention”. Bothma and Roodt (2012) identify turnover intention as a type of withdrawal behaviour that is associated with under-identification with work. They further assert that turnover or intention to quit is the employee’s conscious and deliberate willingness to leave the organisation and it is regarded as the last in a sequence of withdrawal cognitions. Du Plooy and Gert (2010, p.2) and Morrel, Loan-Clarke and Wilkinson (2001) briefly define intention to quit as “the employee’s conscious and deliberate wilfulness to leave the organisation”. According to Ongori (2007), employee turnover is the rotation of workers around the labour market; between firms, jobs and occupations; and between the states of employment and unemployment.

Intention to quit or leave the organisation has been studied over several decades which in turn contributed to the findings of the negative and positive aspects of

employee turnover (Mossholder, Bedeian, Norria, Giles & Feild, 1988). Tuzun and Kalemci (2012) explain that many studies show that intention to quit is a good predictor of actual turnover, therefore making it essential for organisations to investigate and understand the reasons behind turnover intention and how to control or minimise them. Robyn and

Robyn and Du Preez (2013) also explain that the main important reason for investigating employee's intention to quit in any organisation is to assist the human resources take a proactive approach to the organisation's retention strategies and try by all means to decrease the turnover intention. Du Plooy and Roodt (2010) also feel that a proper understanding of why employees intend to quit should assist organisations with a more effective management strategy of employee turnover.

Werbel and Bedeian (1989) on the other hand argued that, turnover is not always detrimental to organisations. For example, there are those employees who simply are poor performers even after many interventions have been tried by the organisation to help them improve their performance. They explain that losing these employees is often beneficial rather than detrimental to the organisation. They further assert that new employees can stimulate management by providing new and innovative ideas and provide skills that are better suited to the organisation's growth.

6.1.1. Reasons associated with employees' intention to quit

Some researchers have over a number of years attempted to answer the question of what makes employees intend to leave the organisation. They did this by investigating possible reasons of why employees often intend leaving the organisation. Results from this research have disappointingly shown very little consistency in findings. This is partly due to the diversity of employees. It has therefore been concluded that there are many reasons why people voluntarily quit from one organisation to another or why people choose to leave the organisation. Out of these many reasons, the one identified as that which mostly leads the employees to intend to quit is stress. The experience of job-related stress (job stress), and the range factors that lead to job related stress (stressors), make employees want to quit (Ongori, 2007).

Other than stress, certain factors have been found to be associated with intention to quit. These are age, gender, tenure, educational qualifications, and marital status (Werbel & Bedeian, 1989). For the purpose of this

study, tenure is defined as the status of holding one's position on a permanent basis without periodic contract renewals (the American Heritage free dictionary).

According to Hayes, O'Brien-Pallas, Duffield, Shamian, Buchan, Hughes, Laschinger and North (2012), employees' demographic characteristics have been advanced in many models as predictors of withdrawal. One of these demographic characteristics is age.

In a study conducted by Werbel and Bedeian (1989), the influence of age on employees' intention to quit has been investigated. The reason for investigating age as an influence of employee's intention to quit was the fact that employee needs are likely to vary by age. The method that employers use to motivate younger employees might not work for older employees and for this reason, they might intend leaving the organisation by perhaps taking early retirement. On the other hand, those older employees who do not intend to retire early might hold on to the organisation due to fear of struggling to find another suitable employment. Results of this study showed modest to low relationship between age and intention to quit.

Tenure has been identified as one of the factors that may drive employees to having intentions of quitting. According to Wandera (2011), the world of work today is changing and many organisations prefer employing people on short-term contracts rather than permanent appointments. There are many reasons why organisations prefer short-term contracts as opposed to permanent appointments. Coetzee and De Villiers (2010) blame the growth in non-permanent appointments and casual work arrangements to the increasing strain and pressure on South African organisations to enhance performance and sustain their competitiveness. In support of this belief, Druker and Croucher (2000) believe that organisations use short-term contracts to screen out poor performers so that they can offer permanent employment to those individuals who were considered best performers while on short-term contract. As much as this method looks good for the organisation, Wandera (2011) warns that organisations end up losing the best performing employees because these employees tend to leave the organisation, due to the desire for permanent work, for more permanent appointments with other organisations that have such openings.

Increasing level of education in employees seems to contribute to the employees' intention to quit. Jonathan, Thibeli and Darroux (2013) recognise education level as one of the reasons why employees often intend leaving

their current organisations. In support of this view, they point out that as the employee's educational level advances, the perceived reward-cost ratio may be impacted. It is almost obvious that if the reward-cost ratio of staying with current employment differs with other employment, the employee might consider leaving for the better one.

Marital status is another reason that could be linked to employee's intent to quit. For example, an employee would, while in the employ of UFH, get married to someone who resides in another province and decide to join them, and thereby start showing signs of quitting intentions. Spouses might also be transferred to different cities, causing their spouse to want to quit employment to be with their spouses. On the other hand, someone who was married and gets divorced while in the employ of UFH might want to quit employment and start a new life elsewhere.

6.2. Job Engagement

Rothmann (2008) defines engagement as some energetic state whereby the employee will be dedicated to excellent performance at work. Simon and Buitendach (2013) also affirmed that an engaged employee is highly confident of her or his effectiveness. Furthermore, this dedication to excellent performance is shown by energy, more involvement, and efficacy. According to Bezuidenhout and Cilliers (2010), job engagement is characterized by energy, efficacy and involvement. They further assert that effective organisations are the ones that put more focus on job engagement. Rothmann, Jorgensen and Marais (2011), focus more on the psychological aspect of job engagement. They define job engagement as a psychological state of involvement, commitment and attachment to a work role. They explain that being engaged in one's work role leads to fulfilment and contributes to personal well-being. Olivier & Rothmann (2007) argued that even though the main focus is often on the organisation's well-being, work engagement focuses on the work itself.

Job engagement exhibits some diverse characteristics. Due to this, it is considered a multidimensional concept. These concepts are vigour, dedication, and absorption. It is understood that these concepts were brought about by a focus on the positive side of burnout, known as job engagement. Engagement refers to a more continual and prevalent affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual or behaviour (Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Rothmann et al., 2011; Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Bothma and Roodt (2012) focus on three characteristics of a fulfilling work-related state

of mind that thoroughly define job engagement. These are vigour, dedication and absorption:

- Vigour is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work and persistence even in the face of difficulties.
- Dedication is characterised by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge.
- Absorption is characterised by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work.

It is believed that engaged employees are highly likely to have very good relationships with their employers and fellow colleagues. These good relationships lead to positive attitudes and behaviours, which in turn lead to good work performance and client satisfaction. Job engagement has therefore become a very important research area (Rothmann, Jorgensen & Marais, 2011; Olivier & Rothmann, 2007, Sakovska, 2012).

6.2.1. Antecedents of job engagement

As job engagement has only become a hot topic in recent years in research, the available research literature on the topic is very basic and little is known about job engagement's antecedents. Saks (2006) identified some antecedents of job engagement from different models of job engagement. Job characteristics, rewards and recognition, perceived organisational support were identified as the most crucial antecedents of job engagement (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006)

Job characteristics

According to Kahn (1992), psychological importance is related to a sense of return on investments of the self-in-role performances. Therefore, psychological importance or meaningfulness can be accomplished components that provide challenging work, diversity, use of different skills, personal discretion, and the chance to make important contributions. Jobs that are high on the core job components provide employees with an opportunity and incentive to bring more of themselves into their work or to be more engaged.

Rewards and recognition

Kahn (1990) revealed that employees differ in their engagement as a function of their understanding of the benefits they receive from a role. Moreover, a sense of return on investments can come from external rewards and recognition in addition to meaningful work.

Therefore, one might expect that employees might be more likely engaged at work to the extent that they attach a greater amount of rewards and recognition for their role performances.

Organisational and supervisor support

Kahn (1990) established that supportive and trusting relationships between managers and employees encourage psychological safety. Employees felt safe in work environments that portrayed honesty, openness and supportiveness. Supportive environments allow members to experiment and try new things without the fear of having to face the consequences in the event that they fail. Openness and supportiveness promotes job engagement. Saks (2006) also confirmed that support from colleagues predicted engagement.

6.3. Job engagement and intention to quit

Employee engagement is believed to be negatively related to intention to quit (Robyn & Du Preez, 2013; Simons & Buitendach, 2013; Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010). According to Robyn and Du Preez (2013, p.4), “engaged employees are likely to have a greater attachment to their organisation and a lower tendency to leave their organisation.” Coetzee and de Villiers (2010) also affirm that engaged employees are always willing to take initiative and self-direct their lives, even when they get tired, they do not enslave to their job and with this attitude they are never in a situation where they feel like they want to leave the organisation. Simons and Buitendach (2013) affirm this by explaining that one of the concepts associated with job engagement, absorption, lead employees to be happily absorbed to their work. When employees are happily absorbed, time passes quickly and as a result employees find it difficult to detach themselves to their jobs.

Previous research done on job engagement has confirmed that job engagement is mostly related to positive organisational outcomes, one of these outcomes is low turnover intention (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). According to Robyn and du Preez (2013), organisations should try and create strategies that will encourage a culture where skilled employees are engaged on order to retain them.

6.4. South African Institutions of higher learning

Generally, institutions of higher learning depend on government subsidies and external funding and sponsors. In order for them to keep receiving these

sponsors and funding, they need to remain competitive (Robyn & Du Preez, 2013). This is the case for South African institutions of higher learning as well. The employees of any institution play a major role in ensuring that the institution remains competitive. Their well-being is therefore very important.

6.4.1. Challenges facing SA institutions of higher learning

South African institutions of higher learning used to provide low stress working environments, but that has unfortunately changed. The institutions of higher learning in South Africa have over the last two decades been subjected to many changes, challenges, and problems (Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008; Coetzee & Rothmann, 2005). There are many factors that have contributed to these challenges and problems. These include heartfelt inequities and some distortions of the system (Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008). Viljoen and Rothmann (2009) seem to also agree that, during the last two decades, institutions of higher learning in South Africa have undergone many rapid changes and faced so many predicaments which have contributed to the high levels of stress experienced by employees of the institutions. These predicaments and changes include financial demands, insecurities, some mergers, changes in management and management styles. These are all crucial and difficult to avoid, and have led to the high levels of stress experienced by employees in institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

There is also uneven and poor articulation amongst the different types of higher learning institutions. Furthermore, students who come from poor background and are under-prepared for the higher learning environment also contribute to the stress-related problems faced by the institutions of higher learning in South Africa. All these factors combined are bound to cause pressure to one group of an institution's employees, for instance, the academic staff members. Once the academic staff members feel stressed and pressured, it is highly likely that they will pressurize the other group of employees, the support staff, making the environment very stressful and difficult to work in (Rothmann & Barkhuizen 2008).

Unequal distribution of resources, declining state subsidy, as well as increased competition amongst the institutions of higher learning have been identified as some of the problems that lead to stressful working environments in South African institutions of higher learning (Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008). Erosion in

pay and job security have also been identified as major problems facing the institutions of higher learning in South Africa. Staff feel threatened by job insecurity as more appointments are fixed-term contracts as opposed to the previous security of being employed permanently (Viljoen & Rothmann, 2009).

In this section, an attention was given to the new theories of job engagement that are emerging as this is a research concept that is fairly new. Relationship amongst job engagement and intention to quit were thoroughly interrogated. It was illustrated though the literature that organisational stress may advance inclination in employees to leave the organisation. The literature also argued that engaged employees cope very well in stressful situations, therefore decreasing the chances of them intending to leave the organisation. Further research needs to be conducted to further understand these propositions so that they can be confirmed or questioned.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter reviewed literature on job engagement and employees' intention to quit. Theoretical framework was linked to all these variables. This chapter focused on the research methodology used for this study. The methodology included a description of the population and sample. The instruments used to collect data are also discussed with a focus on their rationale, validity and reliability. The procedure used to collect data and methods used to analyse data are discussed.

7.1. Research Design

Research design refers to the steps that researchers follow to complete their study from start to finish. It includes asking research questions based on theoretical orientation, selection of respondents, data collection and reporting of the results (Marvasti, 2004). A non-experimental survey design, following the quantitative tradition was used in pursuit of the research objectives for this study. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) assert that adopting a quantitative research technique enables the collection of data in the form of numbers, and statistical techniques are used to analyse the data.

7.1.1. Population

According to Babbie and Mouton (2006), the population for a study is that group (usually of people) about whom we want to draw conclusions. They further explain that

we are almost never able to study all the members of the population that interest us, and we can never make every possible observation of them. The population of the proposed study comprised of all the support or administrative personnel of the University of Fort Hare in all three campuses namely: Alice, Bisho, and East London campus. The population constituted 638 employees (N=638).

7.1.2. Sample

According to Gray (2004), a sample is a group of objects, occurrences or individuals chosen from the main population for a study. This study targeted administrative or support personnel at the University of Fort Hare. A research sample was drawn from the population of administrative/support employees working in all three campuses (Alice campus, Bisho campus, East London campus) of the University of Fort Hare. The sample selected was a large portion of the population and thus fairly represented the population. Raosoft calculator was used to calculate the sample size. The recommended sample size of the present study was 225. Based on this recommended figure, 225 questionnaires were distributed and employees were encouraged to partake in the study. From the total number of questionnaires administered, only 135 (n=135) usable questionnaires were returned by the support personnel of the University of Fort Hare. This yields a response rate of 60 percent. According to Sekaran (2000), a response rate of 30 percent is regarded as acceptable for most research purposes. Objectives of the research play a role in deciding the sample size that produces the right quality and quantity of the information needed. Therefore, in drawing a sample, the researcher should ensure that the characteristics of the population are well represented in order to make meaningful inferences.

7.2. Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure used in this research was probability sampling. This is a sampling method where every element of the population had an equal chance of being selected for the sample. The type of probability sampling employed for the research was random sampling. The form of random sampling was cluster random sampling in which "all the members of the selected clusters, or a simple random sample or a stratified random sample drawn from these clusters, constitute the eventual sample" (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005:65).

7.3. Data Collection

7.3.1. Research instruments

A questionnaire was used as the research instrument to collect data. According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1997), a questionnaire consists of a list of questions that must be formulated, constructed and sequenced to produce the most constructive data in the most effective manner. According to Babbie and Mouton (2006), the use of questionnaires is advantageous because questionnaires are economical, speedy, there is no bias (as in interviews: interviewer bias), and the possibility of anonymity and privacy encourages candidates to be willing to respond on sensitive issues, and do so honestly. The questionnaire was used also because it translates the research objectives into specific questions that are asked from the respondents. The respondents were not asked to give their names so that they can be assured that anonymity is maintained. The questionnaire consisted of a covering letter and comprised of the following four sections:

7.3.1.1. Biographical information

A demographic questionnaire was self-developed for this study, and was handed out to all participants for completion. The questionnaire asked participants to answer questions regarding their age, gender, marital status, race/ethnicity, education level, years at the institution, tenure, and job grade.

7.3.1.2 Intention to quit

Turnover intention scale developed by Roodt in 2004 was used to measure intention to quit. According to Bothma and Roodt (2012), to enhance reliability, behavior intention should be measured within a reasonable time frame. This is a 14-item scale. The Scale adopts a 7-point Likert scale, where participants are asked to indicate the extent to which they experience particular feelings. Responses range from "1" (Never), to "7"

(Always). This scale has a reliability coefficient of 0.80 for turnover intention or intention to quit.

7.3.1.3. Job engagement

As previously mentioned, job engagement is identified as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state. Job engagement was measured using Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). This 17-item instrument is composed of three subconstructs namely vigour, dedication, and absorption. Vigour is measured using 6

items; e.g. "At my work, I feel bursting with energy". Dedication is measured using 5 items; e.g. "I find my work full of meaning and purpose (Rothmann, 2008). Absorption is measured by 6 items; e.g. "Time flies when I'm working" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The work-engagement items are scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 ('never') to 6 ('always' or 'everyday'), where 6 represent extreme values on the scale. The reliability coefficient of this scale ranges between 0.68 and 0.91 (Bothma & Roodt, 2012).

7.3.2. Method of data collection

Data for this research was collected through questionnaires, but before data collection, permission was requested from the university's top management. Once the permission was granted, the respondents were randomly selected from a complete report of support personnel generated from the ITS (Integrated Tertiary Software) Integrator personnel system used by the institution. Questionnaires were then distributed to these respondents. During the distribution process, the purpose of the study was fully explained, verbally. Even though participation was encouraged, the respondents were informed that participation was optional and that one could withdraw at any stage, if they felt that they did not want to continue with the questionnaire. Respondents were given a week to complete the questionnaires. After the week passed, the questionnaires were collected. After the data collection phase, the researcher checked all the questionnaires for missing data. Those with missing data were discarded.

7.3.3. Method of data analysis

Statistical analysis were carried out with SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Cronbach alpha co-efficient was used to measure reliability of the measuring instruments. Pearson correlation analysis of variance and moderated regression analysis was used to analyse data.

7.4. Ethical considerations

This study took note of ethical considerations. Permission to conduct the study was requested from the University's Ethics Committee and the University of Fort Hare's management. Before conducting this study, the researcher ensured that all participants were fully informed of what the study is about and were asked to agree voluntarily to take part in the research. This was done orally as well as by means of a covering letter that accompanied the research questionnaire. The researcher

respected the privacy of the participants. The information gathered was dealt with in confidentiality, and the research participants were not identified. The researcher did not give participants deceptive information or withhold information so as to deceive them. Where the researcher used the work of others, proper acknowledgement of their contributions has been made.

This section provided an overview of the research methods utilized in the study. The population, the sample and its selection, the measuring instruments, the statistical methods used in testing the hypothesis, delimitations of the study and ethical considerations were all discussed and fully explained in this chapter.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section presents the results obtained based on the analysis methods used. Internal consistencies in terms of Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the two variables (job engagement and intention to quit) are presented in the first part of this chapter. The second part of the chapter presents descriptive statistics for demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, race, qualification, tenure, job status, and job grade. The results relating to the inferential statistical analysis relevant to the hypotheses of the study are presented, and the chapter is concluded with a summary.

8.1. Internal Consistency

8.1.1. Job engagement

Table 1: Job Engagement Questionnaire’s Coefficient Alpha

Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha	
Variables	Alpha
Raw	0.917771
Standardized	0.920231

Table 1 above shows that the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha of the job engagement questionnaire in the current study was 0.91, which shows that the instrument was reliable in measuring the job engagement among the employees.

8.1.2. Intention to quit

Table 2: Turnover Intention Questionnaire’s Coefficient Alpha

Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha	
Variables	Alpha
Raw	0.818444
Standardized	0.824627

Table 2 above illustrates that the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha of the turnover intentions questionnaire in study was 0.81. This confidently shows that the instrument had high reliability test.

8.1.3. Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for the whole questionnaire

Table 3: Coefficient Alpha For The Whole Questionnaire

Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha	
Variables	Alpha
Raw	0.835015
Standardized	0.824486

Table 3 above demonstrates that the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for the whole questionnaire used in the study was 0.83. This shows that the whole questionnaire was reliable.

8.2. Descriptive Statistics

8.2.1. Age distribution of respondents

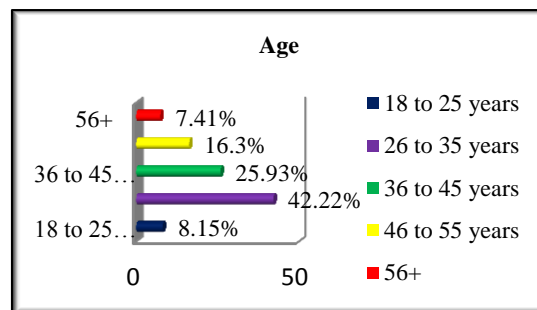


Figure 2: Age Distribution Of Respondents

Figure 2 above shows that the majority of the respondents (42.22%, n=57) are in the age group 26 to 35 years, while 25.93% (n=35) are in the age group 36 to 45 years. 22 respondents (16.3%) fall in the age category 46 to 55 years, 11 respondents (8.15%) fall in the age category 18 to 25 years. A further 7.41% (n=10) fall in the 56+ years age category.

8.2.2. Gender distribution of respondents

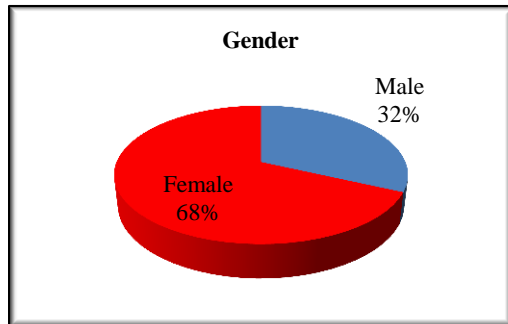


Figure 3: Gender Distribution Of Respondents

Figure 3 depicts the gender of respondents. The majority of the respondents (68%, n=92) are female respondents, while male respondents comprised 32% (n=43) of the sample.

8.2.3. Marital status of respondents

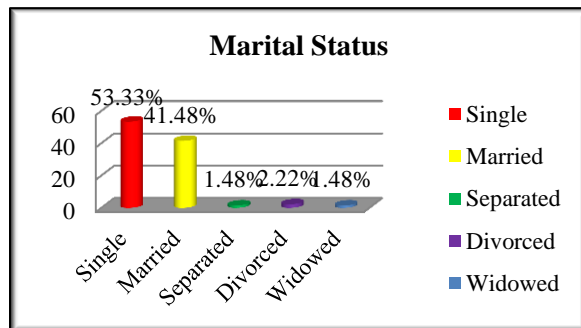


Figure 4: Marital Status Distribution Of Respondents

Figure 4 above illustrates that of the 135 respondents who participated, 72 (53.33%) of the respondents are single, 56 respondents (41.48%) are married, three respondents (2.22%) are single, two (1.48%) respondents are widowed and another two (1.48%) of them are separated.

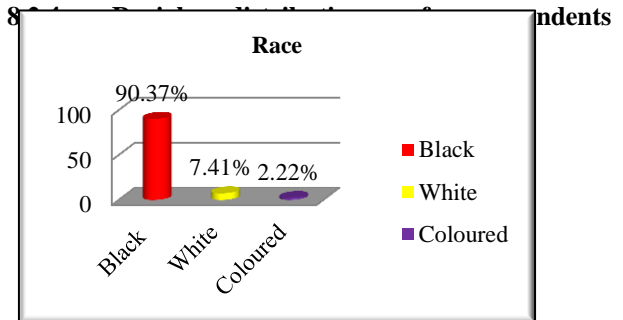


Figure 5: Racial Distribution Of Respondents

Figure 5 above shows the racial distribution of the sample. The majority of the sample were black employees (90.37%; n=122), 7.41% (n=10) were white employees and a further 2.22% (n =3) were coloured employees.

8.2.5. Educational qualifications of respondents

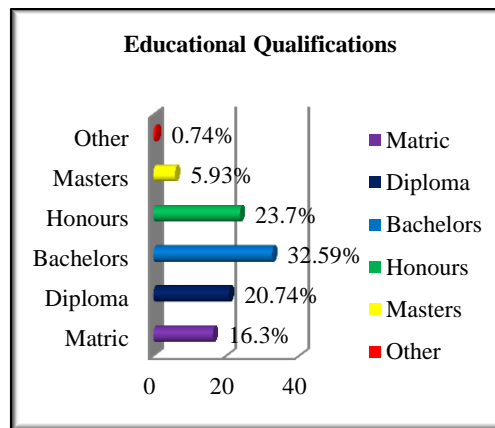


Figure 6: Educational Qualification Distribution Of Respondents

Figure 6 above illustrates the education level of the sample. The graph depicts that the majority of the respondents, 32.59% (n =44) has a bachelor’s degree, 23.7% (n=32) has a honour’s degree, 20.74% (n=28) has a diploma, 16.3% (n=22) has a matric, whilst 5.93% (n=8) possess a master’s degree educational level. One respondent (0.74%) have other qualifications.

8.2.6. Tenure distributions of respondents

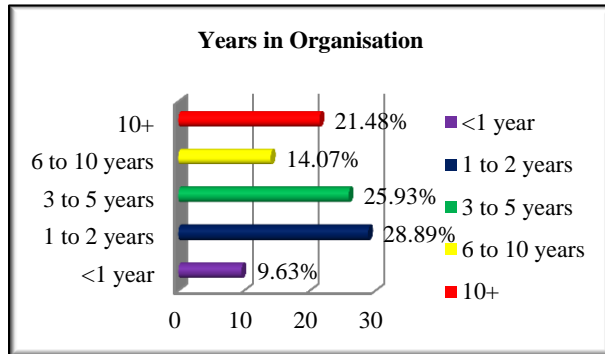


Figure 7: Tenure Distribution Of Respondents

Figure 7 above shows the number of years that the respondents have served in their organisation. Majority of the employees (28.89% or n=39) have been in the organisation for one to two years, 25.93% (n=35) have been in the organisation for three to five years while 21.48% (n=29) have a tenure of over ten years. 19 respondents (14.07%) have worked for six to ten years while 9.63% (n=13) have been with the organisation for less than a year.

8.2.7. Job status of respondents

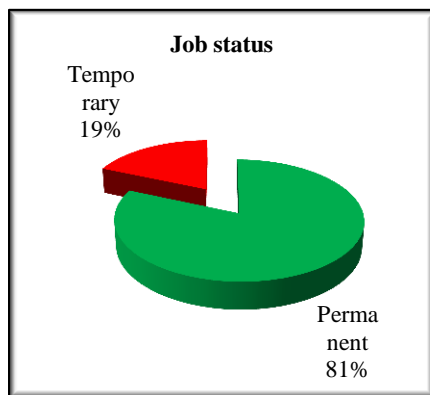


Figure 8: Job Status Distribution Of Respondents

The figure 8 above shows the job status distribution of the respondents. The majority of the employees had permanent jobs (81%; n=110) while 19% (n=10) of them are employed on temporary basis.

8.2.8. Job grades of respondents

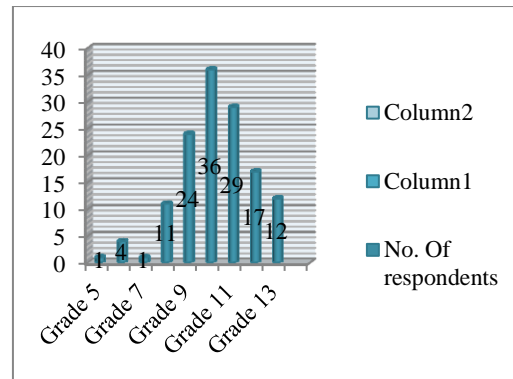


Figure 9: Job Grade Distribution Of Respondents

Figure 9 above shows that the majority of support personnel at UFH are at grade 10 with n=36 (26.7%) personnel occupying this grade. Only 0.7% (n=1) member is occupying a grade 5 senior management post. 3% (n=4) are at grade 6 which is also senior management level. 0.7% (n=1) is at grade 7. Grade 8, middle management has 8.1% (n=11) employees. 17.8% (n=24) are at grade 9. The posts at lower level grades 11, 12, and 13 are occupied by a total of 43% (n=58) support personnel.

8.3. Inferential Statistics

8.3.1. Hypothesis-1

H_0 : Job engagement is not significantly negatively related to intention to quit.

H_1 : Job engagement is significantly negatively related to intention to quit.

Table 6: Correlations Between The Study Variables

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 135 Prob > r under H0: Rho=0		
	TURNOVER	ENGAGEMENT
TURNOVER	1.00000	-0.06502 0.4537
ENGAGEMENT	-0.06502 0.4537	1.00000

Table 6 shows that job engagement is not significantly negatively related to intention to quit ($r=-0.06502$; $p=0.4537$). Hence the alternative hypothesis is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis.

The results were presented in terms of the formulated hypothesis. The next section will present the research results and include the discussion, recommendations, limitations of the study and conclusion of the entire study.

9. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results are discussed in light of the hypothesis and previous research findings. The strengths and limitations of the study are taken into consideration, as these often provide suggestions and recommendations for future research. At the end, summary of the chapter and the entire study is concluded.

9.1. Discussion Of Results

The following hypothesis was developed to scrutinise the relationship between job engagement and intention to quit.

Hypothesis-1

H_0 : Job engagement is not significantly negatively related to intention to quit.

H_1 : Job engagement is significantly negatively related to intention to quit.

The results show that job engagement is not significantly negatively related to intention to quit ($r=-0.06502$; $p=0.4537$). Therefore, the research hypothesis is rejected in favour of the null hypothesis.

In contrast, Robyn and Du Preez (2013); Simons and Buitendach (2013); and Du Plooy and Roodt (2010) all conducted studies which yielded results showing that employee engagement is believed to be negatively related to intention to quit. According to Robyn and Du Preez (2013, p4), “engaged employees are likely to have a greater attachment to their organisation and a lower tendency to leave their organisation.” This is contrary to the findings of the current study. This therefore suggests that more research in relation to the relationship between job engagement and intention to quit needs to be conducted so as to have a better understanding of these variables.

10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Even though this study has been very successful, however, the following limitations should be noted:

- This study used a purely quantitative paradigm. The incorporation of qualitative methodologies may provide a deeper understanding of the relationships among the variable in this study. For example, this study used the Likert type questionnaires, which limit the participants from expressing their own views.
- This study was not funded, and due to that challenge, resources were limited, and the study therefore focused on a limited number ($n=135$) of support personnel at the UFH’s three campuses. Having a small sample may affect the reliability of the results, therefore limiting the generalisability of the findings.
- The population, from department and faculties across the three campuses of the university was not stratified. This can be an obstacle because there might be some faculties or departments, or even job grade levels which might have been over or underrepresented.
- This considered only one university in the Eastern Cape Province. It would be better if the same study can be conducted in other universities throughout South Africa.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future researchers should consider the limitations of the present study as mentioned in the previous section. Should the researcher need to generalise the findings of the present study to other institutions of higher learning in South Africa, he/she should do so with caution.

Similar studies have been conducted in South Africa and other countries in general. The knowledge and understanding of job engagement is however, very limited, as this is still a fairly new concept in research. It is therefore recommended that researchers consider replicating studies that further explore job engagement so as to gain better understanding of the concept and its role in the workplace.

Future researchers should consider using qualitative research rather than quantitative techniques as used in the present study. This will help to ensure the triangulation of research findings. Triangulation is usually used to counteract common method variance. This means that one can be more confident with similar findings obtained from different methods.

In summary, strong empirical evidence exists to show that correlations exist between job engagement and employees' intention to quit. The chapter also identified some factors that limited the scope of the study. Recommendations and suggestions for future research and managerial practice were given, based on the findings of the study.

12. CONCLUSION RELATING TO THE ENTIRE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to establish whether job engagement is (or not) significantly related to employee's intention to quit. This was investigated among the administrative or support personnel at the University of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape. The sample consisted of support personnel from all three campuses of the institution namely, Alice, Bisho and East London campus. The results of the study showed that correlations existed amongst the two variables.

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