

## Role of Absorption, Dedication, and Vigour on Turnover Intention of Colleges of Education Non-Academic Staff

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Received: 27/2/2021

Accepted: 16/5/2021

**Abstract:** Staff turnover has been a recurring decimal in organisations. Due to mobility of skilled workers and competition over limited experienced workforce, most organisations strive to retain their employees. However, workers still show propensity to leave for many reasons – ranging from organisational variables to personal motives. This study examined vigour, dedication, and absorption as determinants of turnover intention among the non-academic staff of Colleges of Education in Ogun State, Nigeria. Two hundred and sixteen participants, randomly drawn from two public Colleges of Education, partook in the study. We collected data using two standardised instruments. One research question was raised to guide the study and the results affirmed the enquiry. Data was subjected to correlational, t-test, regression analysis and ANOVA to establish the relationships and prediction among the studied variables. Findings indicated that turnover intention, vigour, dedication, and absorption are variously significantly positively related. Further analysis revealed a significant influence of vigour, dedication, and absorption to the prediction of turnover intention of participants; accounting for 19.4% of the variance in the criterion variable. Dedication was the most potent positive indicator of turnover intention followed by absorption and vigour in that order. Building on the results, some recommendations were made.

**Keywords:** Turnover intention, absorption, dedication, vigour, non-academic staff

### دور الاستيعاب والتفاني والنشاط في نوايا الدوران الوظيفي لدى الموظفين الغير أكاديميين في كليات التربية

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يعتبر معدل دوران الموظفين رقمًا متكررًا في المؤسسات، ونظرًا لتنقل الموظفين المهرة والمنافسة على القوى العاملة ذات الخبرة، فإن معظم المؤسسات تسعى جاهدة للاحتفاظ بموظفيها. ومع ذلك، لا يزال الموظفون يظهرون الرغبة في الانتقال لأسباب عديدة والتي تشمل التغيرات التنظيمية والدوافع الشخصية. ويبحث هذه الدراسة محددات الاستيعاب والتفاني والنشاط في نوايا الدوران الوظيفي لدى الموظفين الغير أكاديميين في كليات التربية بولاية أوجون في نيجيريا. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من مائتين وستة عشر مشاركًا والذين تم اختيارهم عشوائيًا من كليتين تعليميتين حكوميتين، تم جمع البيانات باستخدام أداتين قياسيتين، وقد أكدت النتائج على فرضيات الدراسة. تم إخضاع البيانات لتحليل الارتباط واختبار "ت" (T-test) وتحليل الانحدار وأنونا لتحليل العلاقات والتنبؤات بين متغيرات الدراسة. أشارت النتائج إلى أن نوايا الدوران الوظيفي والاستيعاب والتفاني والنشاط ترتبط بشكل إيجابي وبدرجة كبيرة. كما كشف التحليل الإضافي عن وجود تأثير كبير للاستيعاب والتفاني والنشاط لتوقع دوران المشاركين والتي تمثل 19.4٪ من التباين في متغير المعيار، وتشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن مؤشر التفاني كان أقوى مؤشر إيجابي على نوايا الدوران الوظيفي يليه الاستيعاب ثم النشاط، وبناءً على نتائج الدراسة، تم تقديم بعض التوصيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نوايا الدوران الوظيفي، الاستيعاب، التفاني، النشاط، الموظفين الغير أكاديميين

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## Introduction

The modern workplace is shaped by digitalisation and knowledge realities which have brought about fierce competition among various market players. Dynamism and diversities in skills influence survival of learning organisations. However, there has been noticed skill-gaps due to the demands of the progressive knowledge-driven economy of the world. To this end, the struggle, most especially over human resources, is rife because of increased employment opportunities for highly skilled workers in the digital divide. Scarcity of skilled workers heightens competition and contemporary organisations contest to retain talented employees and explore the possibilities of attracting more quality workers (Carasco-Saul et al., 2014; Lu et al., 2016). While organisations strive to retain staff members, employees may likely seek 'greener pasture' in relation to their competencies, thereby, leading to staff turnover. Turnover is the detachment of oneself from an employing establishment (Aydogdu & Asikgil, 2011). It is the workers' voluntary or involuntary withdrawal from an organisation (Inyong & Chang-Wook, 2019).

Scholars had postulated several theories that could explain intention to leave. Turnover intention - which is a precursor to actual turnover - is hinged on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen proposes that intention toward subject norms, cumulatively shape an individual's intention and actual behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour is built on Theory of Reasoned Action which stipulated that human behaviour is "from intentions to actions" (Ajzen, 1985). In essence, intention is the quickest determinant of actual behaviour (Alam & Mohammad, 2010). The TPB has been a frequently quoted model for predicting human behavior. In a meta-analytic study, McEachan et al. (2011) reported substantial correlation between intention and behaviour. Hrubes et al. (2001) in their hierarchical regression analysis, found hunting intentions contributing to the prediction of self-reported hunting frequency. This underscores the fact that intention-behaviour relations influence human actions.

Turnover is the actual leaving the organisation by employees while turnover intention (the focus of this study) is the behavioural attitude toward leaving an organisation. Turnover intention might have arisen from the workload, intricate work relationships, long work shifts, and dearth opportunities for career

progression, heavy workload, burnout, occupational stress (Harder et al., 2015; Young et al., 2013). Employee turnover has lots of implications on organisations, such include quality of work, service disruptions, poor organizational performance, truncated productivity, little morale, customer dissatisfaction, financial costs, and ultimately severe economic losses to organisation (Jang & George, 2012; Pizam & Thornburg, 2000; Simons & Hinkin, 2001), the cost of replacing employees is higher than retaining them (Davidson et al., 2010).

Turnover intention relates to feelings of voluntarily leaving or withdrawing from an organization (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010), and has been found to be a precursor to actual turnover (Egan et al., 2004; Gupta & Shaheen, 2017). It should be noted that while many employees think about quitting their job or the organisation, a large number quits (Bamfo et al., 2018; Zopiatis et al., 2014). Literature has reported mixed finding in terms of the effect of turnover intention. While some researchers are of the view that turnover intention affects workers' performance significantly (Timinepere et al., 2018), others opine that turnover intention does not have a significant effect on performance (Terason, 2018). Various reasons may lead to staff turnover intentions, they include organisational and personal factors (Ozimek et al., 2018). One of the organisational factors is the work engagement.

In their extensive work on work engagement, Schaufeli et al. (2002) submitted that employee engagement is a positively fulfilling work-related mindset categorised by absorption, vigour, and dedication. There have been studies for decades which found engagement to be a potent pivot for organizational success with a plethora of benefits to optimistic employees' performance outcomes and optimal financial gains for the organisations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Perko et al., 2016). Engaged workforce has been reported to perform their assigned duties within specified timelines and attend diligently to the job demands (Schaufeli et al., 2002), and are seen as strong organisational assets for sustained competitive advantage (Haynie et al., 2016).

The three dimensions of work engagement - (i) vigour, (ii) dedication and (iii) absorption - are independent variables for this study. Vigour (the psychomotor domain) energises the employees and enhances resilience and therefore making it difficult for engaged workers to detach from their work

based on the amount of energy invested into the work (Bakker, 2011), it stimulates engaged workers' reluctance to change jobs because such change is considered a risky investment of effort and time (Halbesleben, 2010). Gonzalez-Roma et al. (2006) reported vigour having negative correlation with emotional exhaustion. Dedication (the affective factor) is the sense of significance displayed by the employee in terms of pride in what he does, and which creates inspiration to do more despite challenges faced in carrying out assigned tasks. It has been found to be negatively correlated with burnout (Gonzalez-Roma et al., 2006). Absorption (the cognitive element) depicts engaged worker being focused and concentrated during the performance of tasks. Coetzer and Rothmann (2007) reported that absorbed employees are deeply engrossed in their tasks and found it difficult to detach themselves from such tasks.

Like every other human organisation, the tertiary institutions of learning, particularly the Colleges of Education (COEs), are not immune to staff intention to leave and actual leaving. COEs employees' intention to leave might result from psychosocial variables like those of their counterparts in other organisations but peculiar factors like red-tape and lack of decision latitude may be additional reasons for staff members having intention to leave their institutions. Even where there was overall job satisfaction, a substantial amount of turnover existed among extension workers (Blackburn et al., 2017). Retaining staff, therefore, rests on the presence of psychosociological constructs in the workplace. Such concepts include, but not limited to, improved morale, job involvement, work environment, career advancement, job resources and work engagement.

Previous work had studied work engagement as a composite construct but there is rarity of studies on disaggregating the work engagement dimensions in organisational research, particularly against turnover intention and specifically among the studied population in Nigeria. Non-academic staff are human resources that could affect the educational outcomes of students in the institutions – they are part of the students stay in school from registration as freshmen to recordkeeping till graduation. Much work had been done on academics, but little exists on non-academics. More so, that academic have been established to leave their jobs. Few studies are available in this domain of knowledge in academic institutions, especially the Colleges of Education and this

drove us into investigating the gap. To guide the study therefore, we raised a research question – Will vigour, dedication, and absorption influence turnover intention of non-academic staff of Colleges of Education in Ogun State, Nigeria?

## Method

### Research Design

We employed the descriptive research design of the ex-post facto type because no manipulation was made to the variables of the study by the researchers. The variables were studied in their natural occurrence.

### Participants

Two hundred and sixteen non-academic staff of the two government-owned Colleges of Education participated in the study. They were drawn from the Federal College of Education (FCE), Osiele, and the Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu-Ijebu, Ogun State, Nigeria. The number of participants (216) represents 30.77% of the total non-academic workforce of the two institutions. Participants were randomly selected through proportional stratified random sampling technique with due consideration for gender and cadre. This was done because each institution does not have equal number of staff [FCE (528); TASCE (174)].

The demographic distribution of participants is presented in Table 1. It shows that of the 216 non-academic staff who took part in the study, 70 (32.4%) are from State-owned College of Education while 146 (67.6%) are from Federal Colleges of Education. Also, 149 (69.0%) are male whereas 67 (31.0%) are female. Again, 12 (5.6%) are within the age bracket of 18-25 years as 32 (14.8%) are in the 26-35 years age bracket, 84 (38.9%) are within the age bracket of 36-45 years, while 73 (33.8%) are in the age bracket of 46-55 years. Fifteen (6.9%) are 56 years and above. Twenty-three (10.6%) are single while 192 (88.9%) are married and only one (0.5%) happens to be separated. It was also observed that 72 (33.3%) have below ten years working experience while 84 (38.9%) are with 11-20 years of experience. Fifty-two (24.1%) have between 21 and 30-years work experience as eight (3.7%) have 31 years and above in their work experience. Of the 216 participants, 188 (87.0%) are junior staff while 28 (13.0%) are senior staff.

**Table 1:** Demographic distribution of participants

		Frequency	Percent
Ownership of Institution	State	70	32.4
	Federal	146	67.6
	Total	216	100.0
Sex	Male	149	69.0
	Female	67	31.0
	Total	216	100.0
Age	18-25 years	12	5.6
	26-35 years	32	14.8
	36-45 years	84	38.9
	46-55 years	73	33.8
	56 years and above	15	6.9
	Total	216	100.0
Marital Status	Single	23	10.6
	Married	192	88.9
	Separated	1	.5
	Total	216	100.0
Years in Service	Below 10 years	72	33.3
	11-20 years	84	38.9
	21-30 years	52	24.1
	31 years and above	8	3.7
	Total	216	100.0
Cadre	Junior	188	87.0
	Senior	28	13.0
	Total	216	100.0

**Procedure**

The researchers administered the scales to the participants in the two institutions. Some were immediately collected upon completion while the rest were later collected. Of the two hundred and forty forms distributed only two hundred and sixteen (216 = 90%) were used for analysis after data screening. We analyzed the collected data using the descriptive statistics, and Multiple Regression Analysis techniques to assess the prediction of the criterion by the predictor variables and to determine the relationships among considered variables. The results were tested for significance at the .05 level.

**Measures**

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) – we assessed the independent variables using the 17-item, three-dimensional UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2002). UWES is scored on frequency with 0 (never) to 6 (daily). Internal consistencies of the three sub-scales were determined with reported Cronbach alphas: vigour  $\alpha = 0.80$ ; dedication  $\alpha = 0.91$  and absorption  $\alpha = 0.75$ . First, vigour, which represents levels of energy, resilience, persistence, and the willingness to devote more effort to work despite

difficulties, was assessed using a 6-item sub-scale. Some examples of the items are “At my work, I feel bursting with energy” and “At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well”. High score on vigour depicts zest and stamina while low score shows less energy, stamina, and zest on the tasks. Second, dedication, dignifying a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and pride, was measured using a 5-item sub-scale. Examples of the items are “My job inspires me” and “I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose”. High score in dedication represents identification with and meaningfulness to work while low score means less identification and meaningfulness to work. Third, absorption, measured on a 6-item sub-scale epitomises being happily immersed in one’s work and not willing to detach from it. Examples of items on the subscale are “It is difficult to detach myself from my job” and “I am immersed in my work”. Lastly, high score on absorption characterises being happily engrossed in one’s work while low score depicts otherwise.

Turnover Intention Scale (TIS): we measured workers’ intention to leave using 15-item TIS developed by Roodt (2004). The scale, scored on a range of 1 (never) to 7 (always), had a Cronbach

alpha  $\alpha = .913$ ; a high score on the scale indicated a high propensity for turnover intention while a low score indicated propensity to stay on the job (Taboli, 2015). Examples of the items are “I always consider leaving this job” and “I scan the newspaper in search of alternative job opportunities”.

## Results

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics including number, mean and standard deviation of study variables.

	Turnover Intention	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption
N	216	216	216	216
Min.	23	4	2	3
Max.	53	36	30	36
Range	30	32	28	33
Mean	39.13	26.10	25.00	26.42
Median	39	27	27	26
Std. Dev.	4.46	6.66	5.64	7.19
Skewness (Std Error)	-.143 (.166)	-.504 (.166)	-1.389 (.166)	-.450 (.166)
Kurtosis (Std Error)	.957 (.330)	-.382 (.330)	1.694 (.330)	-.528 (.330)

The results indicated that participants experience a high level of turnover intention ( $M = 39.13$ ;  $Sd = 4.46$ ), vigour ( $M = 26.10$ ;  $Sd = 6.66$ ), dedication ( $M = 25.00$ ;  $Sd = 5.64$ ), and absorption ( $M = 26.42$ ;  $Sd = 7.19$ ). In each of the cases, the skewness is negative indicating that the scores are congested to the positive high side of the distribution.

The results in Table 3 indicated that turnover intention, vigour, dedication, and absorption are variously significantly related. Turnover intention was found to be related to vigour ( $r = .345$ ;  $p < .001$ ), dedication ( $r = .427$ ;  $p < .001$ ), and absorption ( $r = .273$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Also, vigour was related to dedication ( $r = .716$ ;  $p < .001$ ), and absorption ( $r = .863$ ;  $p < .001$ ) as dedication was correlated with absorption ( $r = .729$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

## Preliminary Analysis

We conducted a preliminary data analysis to determine the range, mean, and standard deviation of scores of the variables of study. The results are presented in Table 2.

Results in Table 4 showed significant differences in turnover by ownership of institution ( $t = 2.093$ ;  $df = 214$ ;  $p = .038$ ) with participants from the Federal institution possessing higher level of turnover, gender ( $t = 2.592$ ;  $df = 214$ ;  $p = .010$ ) with female participants having higher tendency for turnover, and age ( $F(4,211) = 3.017$ ;  $p = .019$ ) with those with above 56 years and above having greater tendency for turnover. However, no significant differences existed in the level of turnover by cadre and years of service. Notwithstanding, participants within the year of service range of 31 years and above are few within the system and are in the management cadre.

**Table 3.** Correlation coefficients of the bivariate associations among studied variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was also conducted.

	Turnover Intention	Vigour	Dedication	Absorption
Turnover Intention	1.000	.345**	.427**	.273**
Vigour		1.000	.716**	.863**
Dedication			1.000	.729**
Absorption				1.000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Table 4:** Differences in turnover intention by demographic factors

Variable	Level	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Statistics
Ownership	State	70	38.21	3.71	$t_{(214)} = 2.093; p = .038$
	Federal	146	39.56	4.73	
Gender	Male	149	38.60	4.13	$t_{(214)} = 2.592; p = .010$
	Female	67	40.28	4.96	
Cadre	Junior	188	39.21	4.37	$t_{(214)} = .703; p = .483$
	Senior	28	38.57	5.09	
Age	18-25 years	12	38.42	6.32	$F_{(4,211)} = 3.017; p = .019$
	26-35 years	32	39.25	3.33	
	36-45 years	84	39.23	2.41	
	46-55 years	73	38.36	5.92	
	56 years and above	15	42.60	4.31	
	Total	216	39.13	4.46	
Year of Service	Below 10 years	72	38.89	4.45	$F_{(3,212)} = .807; p = .491$
	11-20 years	84	39.37	3.24	
	21-30 years	52	38.75	5.91	
	31 years and above	8	41.130	4.94	
	Total	216	39.13	4.46	

**Multiple Regression Analysis**

Results in Table 5 revealed a significant influence of vigour, dedication, and absorption to the prediction of turnover intention ( $R^2$  (adj) = .194;  $F_{(3,212)} = 18.199; p < .001$ ). This indicated that vigour, dedication, and absorption amounted to 19.4% of the variance in participants’ turnover intention. The research question which sought answer to the influence of vigour, dedication, and absorption on turno-

ver intention was, by this finding, answered in the affirmative. In effect, vigour, dedication, and absorption predicted turnover intention of participants. Dedication was the most potent indicator of turnover intention ( $\beta = .435; t = 4.711; p < .001$ ), followed by absorption ( $\beta = -.289; t = -2.262; p < .05$ ) and vigour ( $\beta = .283; t = 2.261; p < .05$ ) in that order.

**Table 5.** Model summary and the coefficients of the contribution of independent variables to the dependent variable

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	30.302	1.277		23.735	.000
Vigour	.190	.084	.283	2.261	.025
Dedication	.344	.073	.435	4.711	.000
Absorption	-.179	.079	-.289	-2.262	.025
Model Summary	$R^2 = .205; R^2_{(adj)} = .194; F_{(3,212)} = 18.199; p < .001$				

a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Absorption, Dedication, Vigour

## Discussion

The present study investigated the roles of vigour, dedication, and absorption on turnover intention of Colleges of Education non-academic staff. Results revealed a significant relationship among the studied variables – turnover intention was found to be associated with vigour, dedication, and absorption. More so, vigour related with dedication and absorption, dedication correlated with absorption. The results indicated that the three predictor variables influenced the criterion variable. The relative contribution of the independent variables showed dedication as most the potent indicator of turnover intention, then absorption (negative) and lastly vigour. The findings aligned with prior studies that reported association between work engagement dimensions and turnover intention. Kim et al. (2019) and Windon al. (2019), in their studies, across time, reported connection between work engagement and actual turnover; found that low work engagement predicting turnover intention and the actual movement to other organisations.

Also, earlier findings showed that work engagement negatively related to turnover intentions (Zhao & Zhao, 2017). Another study found work engagement was positively associated with intention to continue working with one's organisation (Liu et al., 2019). Atitsogbui and Amponsah-Tawiah (2019) argued that engagement was the most potent predictor variable in predicting the turnover intention of workers. Zhang et al. (2015) reported a negative relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention and that turnover intention was partially mediated by work engagement. Also, work engagement is related to low turnover intention (Bon & Shire, 2017).

Discussing the dimensions, dedication, found by this study, as the most potent predictor, was supported by earlier work. Agoi (2015) findings showed a significant negative effect of dedication on turnover intention. Dedication was found to lead to a reduction in staff turnover (Macey & Schneider, 2008). In fact, Gonzalez-Roma et al. (2006) found dedication to be negatively correlated with burnout. The results of the study indicated that dedication among employees is influential to reducing staff turnover. International Survey Research (ISR, 2004), supporting these findings, reported substantial evidence to the effect that organisations would need emotionally engaged employees to reach their full potential.

Absorption (though negative) was found as the second potent predictor of turnover intention. The present study corroborated the submission of previous studies. Waseem et al. (2016) reported that the more absorbed employees in their jobs the more they are equipped against burnout syndrome and thus may display less intention to leave the organisation, however, Agoi (2015) reported a significant negative effect of absorption on turnover intention. Absorbed employees were reported to be deeply engrossed in their work and they might find it difficult detaching themselves from work (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007). It is however surprising that absorption which positively related to turnover intention could have a negative contribution to intention to leave. One would be made to believe that getting absorbed on tasks may be an indication of job stress. However, studies (Iqbal et al., 2012; Oksanen, 2019) have reported a negative and significant relationship between job stress work-life imbalance and employee engagement. The study found vigour as the least work engagement dimension in relation to turnover intention. Prior studies such as Gonzalez-Roma et al. (2006) found vigour having negative correlation with emotional exhaustion.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study aimed at investigating the role of vigour, dedication, and absorption to turnover intention of non-academic staff of Colleges of Education in Ogun state, Nigeria. One research question was raised to guide the study and it supported the outcome. The findings of the study showed that vigour, dedication, and absorption had a significant relationship with turnover intention. Results also indicated vigour, dedication and absorption predicted turnover intention of the participants. However, the prediction is not consistent across the three predictors in terms of reported negative and positive values. Though the three predictors predicted turnover intention, vigour, and dedication positively predicted the criterion while absorption deviated because it negatively predicted the criterion variable. This showed that when the value of predictor is positive, the value of the criterion increased; and when the value of the predictor is negative, the value of the criterion decreases. In essence, absorption being negative shows less propensity for turnover intention among the participants.

Based on the findings, we recommended among others that managers should improve work engagement dimensions among employees through emotional mastery training programmes which may im-

prove staff performance and reduce staff turnover. Also, organizations should put in place flexible work schedules so that work-life balance is fostered among their employees. For workers to find meaning and purpose in their work, organizations should design employee's task schedule in manners that lead to engagement.

Further, cognitive training programmes should be organised to enhance employees' absorption skills. Such training could include creativity techniques and cognitive behaviour therapy. This will enable employees to improve on their absorption level and thereby reducing their level of turnover intents. Absorbed employees tend to be aware of what is expected of them and how they carry out their tasks to aid the organization's growth.

To achieve the retention of staff, managers need to assist the employees build confidence in themselves, establish flexible routines, and set achievable and realistic goals for the employees. This will improve effective functioning of staff members as well as the organization.

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