

**HRM PRACTICES, WORKPLACE BULLYING
AND TURNOVER INTENTION:
THE ROLES OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AND
PERCEIVED SUPPORT**

GADI DUNG PAUL

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PERCEIVED SUPPORT**

by

GADI DUNG PAUL

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHRPN	Human Resource Practitioners of Nigeria
AHRPN	Human Resource Practitioners of Nigeria
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations
IPMA	Importance-Performance Matrix Analysis
JD-R	Job Demand Resource
LM	Linear Regression Model
NUC	National Universities Commission in Nigeria
POS	Perceived Organizational Support
PSS	Perceived Organizational Support
RMSE	Root Mean Squared Error
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SPOS	Shortened Version of Perceived Organizational Support
THE	Times Higher Education ranking
TI	Turnover Intention
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

**PENGURUSAN SUMBER MANUSIA, PEMBULIAN DI TEMPAT KERJA
DAN NIAT **UNTUK BERHENTI KERJA**: PERANAN PENGLIBATAN
TERHADAP KERJA DAN PERSEPSI SOKONGAN**

ABSTRAK

Universiti awam di Nigeria menghadapi kadar perolehan yang tinggi di kalangan ahli akademiknya. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara amalan HRM, pembulian tempat kerja, dan **niat pusing ganti** di kalangan ahli akademik di 10 universiti awam terbaik di Nigeria. Kajian ini juga mengkaji peranan pengantara penglibatan kerja terhadap hubungan antara amalan HRM dan pembuli di tempat kerja terhadap niat perolehan dan peranan penyederhanaan sokongan organisasi yang dirasakan dan sokongan penyelia yang dirasakan mengenai hubungan antara penglibatan kerja dan **niat pusing ganti**. Keperluan untuk menjalankan kajian ini kerana ketidakkonsistenan atau hubungan yang lemah antara amalan HRM, pembulian tempat kerja, dan keterlibatan kerja dengan **niat pusing ganti** akademik di universiti awam di Nigeria. Lebih-lebih lagi, kajian terdahulu hanya tertumpu pada industri dan dalam konteks Barat selain dari sektor pendidikan, di mana profil demografi sangat berbeza dengan Nigeria. Berdasarkan teori pertukaran sosial dan model tuntutan-sumber pekerjaan (JD-R), kajian ini membina kerangka penyelidikan untuk mengatur penyiasatan amalan HRM dan buli di tempat kerja sebagai peramal **niat pusing ganti** dengan penglibatan kerja sebagai pemboleh ubah pengantara dan sokongan organisasi yang dirasakan dan dirasakan sokongan penyelia sebagai pemboleh ubah penyederhanaan.. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah pensampelan bertujuan dan kaji selidik yang bertujuan untuk mengumpulkan data daripada 455 ahli akademik di 10

universiti awam di Nigeria. Data yang dikumpulkan dianalisis dengan menggunakan pemodelan persamaan struktur kuadrat sepiu terkecil. Berdasarkan analyses, kajian menunjukkan bahawa amalan HRM dan penglibatan kerja mempunyai hubungan negatif yang signifikan dengan **niat pusing ganti** sementara buli di tempat kerja mempunyai hubungan positif yang signifikan dengan **niat pusing ganti** dan hubungan negatif yang signifikan dengan penglibatan kerja. Hasilnya juga menunjukkan bahawa amalan HRM mempunyai hubungan positif dengan penglibatan kerja. Selanjutnya, amalan HRM dan buli di tempat kerja didapati mempunyai hubungan tidak langsung yang signifikan dengan **niat pusing ganti**, melalui penglibatan kerja sebagai orang tengah. Sebaliknya, sokongan penyelia yang dirasakan didapati untuk memoderasi hubungan antara penglibatan kerja dan **niat pusing ganti** sedangkan sokongan organisasi yang dirasakan secara mengejutkan tidak menyederhanakan hubungan antara penglibatan kerja dan **niat pusing ganti**. Penemuan kajian ini bermanfaat bagi penggubal dasar dan pentadbir dari sepuluh universiti awam teratas di Nigeria yang ingin memahami peramal tahap **niat pusing ganti** supaya niat perolehan yang tinggi di kalangan ahli akademik dari sepuluh universiti awam di Nigeria dapat dikendalikan dan dikurangkan.

**HRM PRACTICES, WORKPLACE BULLYING AND TURNOVER
INTENTION: THE ROLES OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AND PERCEIVED
SUPPORT**

ABSTRACT

The public universities in Nigeria face a high turnover rate among its academicians. The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between HRM practices, workplace bullying, and turnover intention of academicians in the top 10 public universities in Nigeria. The study also investigated the mediating role of work engagement on the relationship between HRM practices and workplace bully on turnover intention and the moderating role of perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support on the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention. There was a need to conduct the study because of inconsistency or weak relationship between HRM practices, workplace bullying, and work engagement with turnover intention of academicians in the public universities in Nigeria. Moreover, earlier studies concentrated mostly on industries and in the Western context other than the education sector, where the demographic profile varies greatly from that of Nigeria. Based on the social exchange theory and job demands-resources (JD-R) model, the study builds a research framework that governed the investigation of HRM practices and workplace bullying as the predictors of turnover intention with work engagement as a mediating variable and perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support as the moderating variables. This study employed purposive sampling and survey method to collect data from 455 academicians of the top 10 public universities in Nigeria. Several tests, including Harmon's Single Factor Test, was performed to void the data of the influence of common method bias. The data collected were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling. Based on the

analysis, the study indicated that HRM practices and work engagement have a significant negative relationship with turnover intention while workplace bullying has a significant positive relationship with turnover intention and a significant negative relationship with work engagement. The results also exhibited that HRM practices have a positive relationship with work engagement. Furthermore, HRM practices and workplace bullying had been discovered to have a significant indirect relationship with turnover intention, through work engagement as a mediator. On the other hand, perceived supervisor support was found to moderate the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention whereas perceived organizational support surprisingly did not moderate the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention. The findings of this study are beneficial to both policymakers and administrators of the top ten public universities in Nigeria who wish to apprehend the predictors of turnover intention level so that high turnover intention among academicians of the top ten public universities in Nigeria can be managed and reduced.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Public universities in Nigeria are essential in the creation of awareness for forthcoming talent and socioeconomic advancement in Nigeria (Omale, Oguche, Duru, & Daniel, 2017). According to Akpa and Asikhia (2016), academicians are essential assets to the public universities in Nigeria and the community (Akpa & Asikhia, 2016; Bogoro, 2019). The academicians perform an essential role in contributing to the performance and achievement of public universities in Nigeria (Ajayi & Olatunji, 2017). Public universities in Nigeria have become exposed to losing their very experienced and qualified skill academicians to the private sector and headhunting from other federal government agencies (Omeluzor, 2018). Employee retention is considered a smart strategy as it invests in the important resource of human capital (Albrecht, Breidahl, & Marty, 2018). Managing talented employees requires knowledge recognition, acquisition, advancement, transfer, and maintenance. It is commonly known that the ability to retain experienced employees is a crucial factor in the knowledge-based economy (Onah & Anikwe, 2016). Therefore, ways to retain high performing employees always receive a great deal of attention from researchers and practitioners.

Highly trained and committed employees are often the main competitive advantage for an organization. Thomas J. Watson, the founder of IBM, said: *“You can get capital and erect buildings, but it takes people to build a business”* (Greulich, 2012, p. 4). Losing talented workers may adversely affect an establishment’s competitive advantage as it would precede to a reduction in efficiency and service excellence (Methot, Lepine, Podsakoff, & Christian, 2016, Alkhateri, Abuelhassan, & Khalifa,

2018). Organizations must identify the employees' turnover intention to prevent actual turnover. To avoid actual turnover by suppressing the emergence of turnover intention, public universities in Nigeria need to give preference to HRM practices that need to be practice to maintain their academicians (Abubakar & Abdullahi, 2017).

HRM is one of the factors that affect turnover intention (Langford, 2009; van Woerkom, Bakker, & Nishii, 2016; Dang, Umphress, & Mitchell, 2017; Li, Lee, Mitchell, Hom, & Griffeth, 2016; Colbert, Yee, & George, 2016). Research suggests that HRM encourages employees to engage in their job and therefore lower turnover intention, thus boosting the organizations' competitiveness (Langford, 2009; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Albrecht et al., 2018). The present study proposes that HRM practices are more likely to positively influence employee attitudes and behaviors to the extent that it is comprised of HRM practices that support employee behaviors that align with organizational goals. Hence, the study examines five dimensions of HRM practices, namely performance appraisal, training and development, recruitment, career recognition, and reward recognition.

Employee turnover is a concern in the academic profession has remained recognized for a long time in Nigeria (Onah & Anikwe, 2016; Bogoro, 2019). Substantial academician turnover ratios were observed in tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Akpa & Asikhia, 2016; Ajayi & Olatunji, 2019). The reasons attributed to this are lack of career recognition, long working time, lack of support from the organization, absence of promotion opportunities, absence of training and development prospects (Akpa & Asikhia, 2016; Tabiu, 2019), poor performance appraisal, lack of reward recognition, and poor recruitment programs (Olongunde, Asaolu, & Elumilade, 2007; Clement, 2018). Nigeria Institute of Management reported that turnover rates in tertiary

institutions ranging from 11% to 18.3% in 2017 (Abubakar & Abdullahi, 2017; Ajayi & Olatunji, 2017).

The National Universities Commission in Nigeria (NUC, 2019) reported that the turnover rates among academicians across public universities in Nigeria have increased from 16.4% in 2012 to 18.3% in 2018 (Tizikara & Wilson, 2018; Willis, Towers, & Watson, 2019). Table 1.1 demonstrates the turnover rate in public universities from 2012/2013 to 2017/2018. The survey carried out by the Nigeria National Universities Commission in 2019 indicated that more academicians are likely to leave the universities within the next two years (Bogoro, 2019). This is further supported by a local researcher Omeluzor (2018) who also argued that academicians are likely to leave the university within the next 2 to 4 years due to poor incentives, unfair or unequal treatment, and poor supervision. Also, supported by Nwaneri, Onoka, and Onoka (2016), who also revealed that the occurrence of workplace bullying amongst employees employed in higher institutions in Nigeria is described to be excessive. The results revealed that the whole of 81.5% of the academicians testified that they have been targets of workplace bullying. Manners surveyed in their research consist of gossiping (23.1%), unwarranted workload devoid of supervision (17.3%), backbiting (17.6%), refusal to recognize privacy (14.2%), and demeaning subordinate in the presence of colleagues and visitors (11.0%), intimidation (11.7%) and unreasonable allocation of role and placements (9.3%). The reported impact of workplace bullying among employees include an intention to leave for other organizations because of the feeling that the prevalence is less there (33.6%). The present study will examine a turnover intention in the top 10 public universities in Nigeria. The top 10 public universities in Nigeria are presented in Table 1.1.

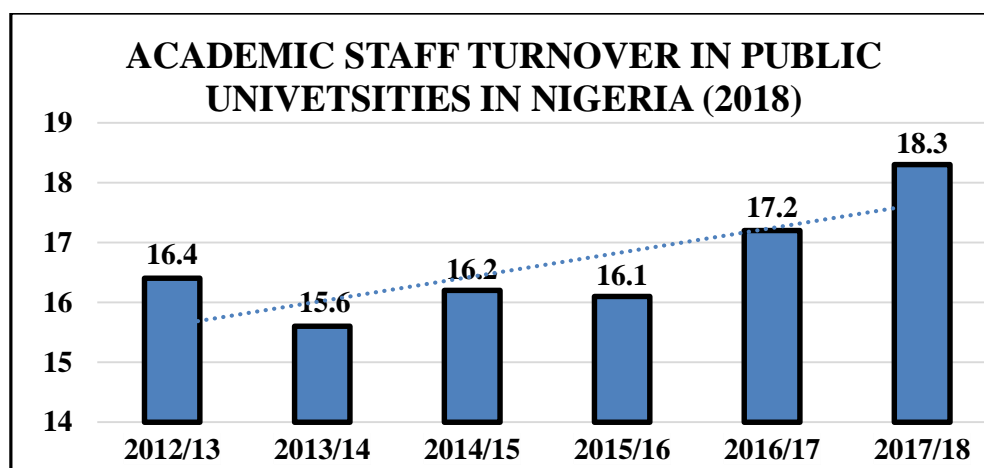


Figure 1.1. Academic staff turnover in public universities in Nigeria

Source: Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics (2019)

As illustrated in Figure 1.1 above, the average turnover rate among academicians for the public universities in Nigeria was 16.4% in 2012/2013, 15.6% in 2013/2014, 16.2% in 2014/2015, 16.1% in 2015/2016, 17.2% in 2016/2017, and 18.3% in 2017/2018. Figure 1.1 shows that the high turnover trend is mostly seen in 2017/2018.

Table 1.1

List and average turnover of academicians from 2014 to 2018 of Top 10 public universities in Nigeria

No.	Top 10 Public Universities	LOCATION	TURNOVER
1	University of Ibadan	Ibadan	11.0%
2	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Nsukka	11.7%
3	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	Zaria	17.1%
4	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	Ile-Ife	12.7%
5	University of Lagos	Lagos	10.4%
6	University of Benin	Benin	13.6%
7	Bayero University, Kano	Kano	18.3%
8	University of Calabar	Calabar	14.1%
9	University of Ilorin	Ilorin	12.3%
10	University of Jos	Jos	12.6%

Source: Nigeria Universities Commission (2019)

As shown in Table 1.1 above, Nigeria Universities Commission (2019), reported academicians average turnover in the top 10 public universities in Nigeria from 2014-2018 with university of Lagos (10.4%) lowest and Bayero university Kano (18.3%) highest turnover rate. Also, Figure 1.2 shows the yearly academicians turnover rates revealing a yearly increase with University of Ibadan from 9% in 2014 to 14% in 2018 and Bayaro University Kano from 15% in 2014 to 23% in 2018 which make the top 10 public universities in Nigeria an important to investigate the reasons for yearly increase in academicians' turnover intention.

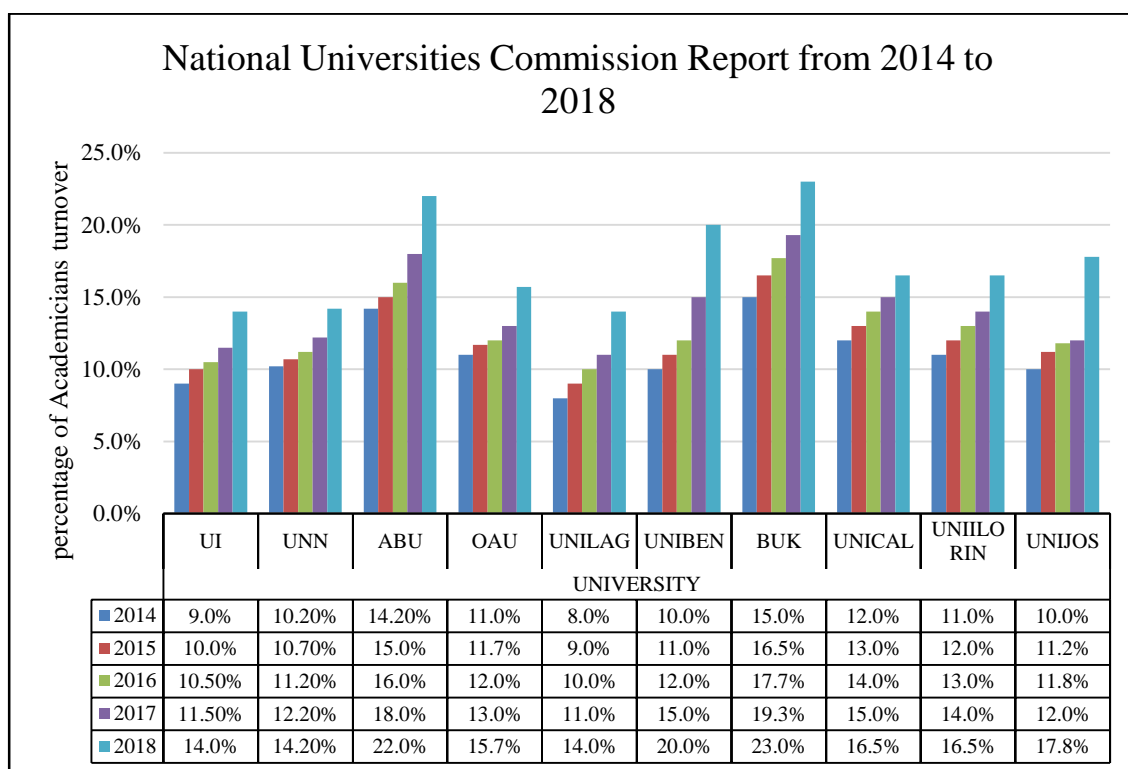


Figure 1.2. Academic staff turnover in public universities in Nigeria

Source: Nigeria Universities commission (2019)



Figure 1.3. Map of Nigeria with the locations of the top 10 public universities in Nigeria

Academicians' turnover is a concern for the university management in Nigeria (Chima & Ifesinachi, 2017; Bogoro, 2019). Although employee turnover is prevalent, its effect is more burdensome on universities because universities in Nigeria have invested three times the amount in staff training and development more than any other sector (Abubakar & Abdullahi, 2017; Chika, Irene, Joseph, & Ayooluwa, 2016; Gberevbie, 2010). Association of Human Resource Practitioners of Nigeria (AHRPN, 2016) found out that the University of Maiduguri one of the public universities in Nigeria alone had 50 voluntary resignations between 2010 and 2016, representing 7 % of the academicians. This was attributed to unfairness in performance

appraisal evaluations, lack of reward recognition, poor recruitment exercise, ineffective management, feeling of not being appreciated, and lack of career opportunities and challenges (Maina, 2016; Tabiu, 2019).

Mamuye (2018) reported that turnover rates in Nigerian universities (public and private) are between 12.7% and 18.1%. The turnover in the top ten public universities in Nigeria has a mean of academician turnover rates between 11% and 18.3% annually (Omale et al., 2017). Turnover of academicians in public universities in Nigeria is a concern to management as hiring and replacement costs are high (Omale et al., 2017). This is expensive because recruiting and training a new employee requires time and money from the top ten public universities in Nigeria. The university with high employee turnover is more likely to encounter more threats of declined performances in the near future (Way, Wright, Tracey, Isnard, & Carolina, 2017).

Equally, employee **turnover intention** is an important challenge and concern to all public universities presently, it remains a critical issue for the organization as of the costs linked with training, recruiting, and selecting fresh workers (Pasamehmetoglu, Guchait, Tracey, Cunningham, & Lei, 2017). This is consistent with The Nation newspaper (2018) that public universities are facing enormous challenges as there is a shortage of lecturers. Federal Ministry of Education (FME) reported that the universities are experiencing turnover challenges in Nigeria with public universities predicting about 5,000 academicians' shortage in the next decade if the turnover crisis is not resolved (Onah & Anikwe, 2016; Omale et al., 2017).

Turnover occurs when employees feel underrated or unnoticed and employees feel defenseless or insignificant at the workplace (Shaw, Dineen, Fang, & Vellella, 2009; Rubel, Kee, Quah, & Rimi, 2017). Some factors affect employees' likelihood to leave an existing job for a new one with a different employer. To minimize employee

turnover, organizations must first understand the main reasons employees leave (Gadi & Kee, 2018). Lack of career opportunities, being overworked, poor reward and recognition, little opportunities for training and development, poor recruitment, and poor performance appraisal are some reasons employees could voluntarily leave an organization (Omeluzor, 2018). Adedayo and Ishola (2018) also stated that earlier studies have discovered that turnover intention is influenced by inadequate working schedules, involving such attributes as the aspect of modern supervision, prospects for promotion, accessible training, and aspect of communication in the establishment. From the workers' perspective, HRM practices are viewed as the organization's endeavors in supporting and improving their career growth (Ajayi & Olatunji, 2019; Ezeh & Olawale, 2017; Timinepere, Agbaeze, Ogbo, & C, 2018). HRM practices need to be present for the employees' positive attitudes and behaviors to take place in the organization, for instance, training and development, performance appraisal, recruitment, career recognition, and reward recognition are all required (Chukwu, 2019).

HRM practices signal the organization's interest for the welfare of its employees. D. E. Guest, (1997) suggested that the more confident the HRM practices are experienced by individuals in their organization, the further satisfied they turn out to be, and the enhanced their psychological contract. Therefore, line managers and HR experts need to work firmly to assure all key practices, for instance, managing performance, management of compensation procedure, employee relations, and training are executed effectively (Paulsen, 2014; Kundu & Lata, 2017; Rubel, Rimi, Yusoff, & Kee, 2018). Nasurdin, Hemdi, and Guat (2008) posited that the manner an establishment manages its employees via HRM practices such as training and development, reward recognition, recruitment, performance appraisal, and career

opportunities will establish the manner and quality of the employer-employee link. Hence, this link is viewed as that of a social exchange where the criterion of reciprocity is key, workers would be further motivated to engage in productive work attitudes and performance (Isimoya, 2015; Ringle, Sarstedt, Mitchell, & Siegfried, 2018; Vosse & Aliyu, 2018).

HRM practices may reduce employee turnover intention via their involvement to enhance individual commitment (Abdulkareem, Chauhan, & Maitama, 2015). HRM practices are distinguished based on inducements offered by an employer to an employee, for example, good performance appraisal, career recognition, and training and development opportunities (Ramaprasad, Nandan, & Pai, 2017; Saleem & Qamar, 2017; Dasilveira, Yang, Mensah, & Quarcoo, 2020). Such inducements and investments in employees increase individuals' expected results and make the work further attractive. Therefore, when the organization increases inducements, they may lower the propensity of the employees to quit and inversely. Simultaneously, managers ought to be conscious of whether the organization could have prevented the employees' decision to leave. This is essential for the design of HR interventions. It may be practical to manage this turnover as required rather than expend on theorized preventive procedures. Line managers HR experts have to work firmly to assure all essential practices for instance managing performance, management of compensation programmed, training, and worker relations are implemented effectively.

The present study proposes that these five HRM practices, namely (i) performance appraisal, (ii) training and development, (iii) recruitment, (iv) career recognition, and (v) reward recognition, create strong HRM practices and need to be present for the employees' positive attitudes and behaviors to take place in the organization. The present study proposes that academician perceptions of quality HRM

practices are more likely to positively influence employee attitudes and behaviors, and, as such be less likely to engage in employee turnover intention.

Workplace bullying is common and can occur in any workplace, including Higher Education. For example, Hollis (2017) conducted her research in education in the United States reported that workplace bullying is considerably related to turnover intention. Hollis (2015a) also stated other factors could lead to turnover intention, for instance, management deficiencies, excessive job demands, and poor working conditions. Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010) mentioned that inadequate career development, inadequate job commitment, poor management, and excessive work stress are reasons that lead to employee turnover intention.

Nkporbu and Douglas (2016) studied 1,300 academicians in private and public universities in Nigeria and unearthed that 38% testified having been bullied at work, 12% said sometimes bullying and 25% had once been bullied. Nwaneri et al. (2016) revealed that the whole of 81.5% of the academicians testified that they had been targets of workplace bullying. Work attitudes examined in their research consist of gossiping (23.1%), unwarranted workload devoid of supervision (17.3%), backbiting (17.6%), refusal to recognize privacy (14.2%), and demeaning subordinate in the presence of colleagues and visitors (11.0%), intimidation (11.7%) and unreasonable allocation of role and placements (9.3%). Also, Ada, Okoli, Obeten, and Akeke (2016) reported that 19.0 to 67% of academicians in public universities in Nigeria had experienced workplace bullying. Ugwu, Onyishi, and Tyoyima, (2013) investigated workplace bullying amongst academicians that suggested 22.4% of participants were subjected to everyday bullying, 40.7% testified being a victim of bullying, and 19.3% testified being bullied “several times a week” or “from time to time”. Dikko, Mutalib, and Ghazali (2017) conducted a study on workplace bullying and found that 58% of the public

universities in Nigeria reported that bullying affects adversely to employee behaviors and 42% said that workplace bullying impacts employee's absenteeism. Bullying conduct has a negative inner influence on targets, decreases their fulfilment and their intention to remain with the organization (Nkporbu & Douglas, 2016; Arif, Siddiqui, & Kazmi, 2018; Mulder, Noranha, Beerepoot, & Magala, 2019). Therefore, the present study proposes that workplace bullying may have a significant link with turnover intention.

This study seeks to advance research on workplace bullying by examining the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention in the context of Higher Education. This study also intends to examine the mediating role of work engagement between workplace bullying and turnover intention. The study on the relationship between workplace bullying and work engagement is scarce (Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, Lande, & Nielsen, 2018). Researchers increasingly highlight the significance of work engagement in improving individuals' contribution toward organizational performance and economical advantage in challenging business environs (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015; Ugwu, Onyishi, & Rodriguez-Sanchez, 2014; Victor & Hoole, 2017; Rafiq, Wu, Chin, & Nasir, 2019).

Work engagement is referred to as an encouraging, fulfilling, work-related state of mind (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006; Karatepe, Ozturk, & Kim, 2019). Employees that are engaged appear to be creative in coping with difficult situations within their work environment (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). While an outcome, high degrees of work engagement can help to encourage a progressive social workplace (Consiglio, Borgogni, Tecco, & Schaufeli, 2016; Khan & Batool, 2018). Also, work engagement is described as an encouraging, enthusiastic job-related condition of mind that may be employed for organizational achievement and individual career-related well-being for the employee (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015).

Work engagement signifies to a withstanding positive inspirational state toward work emerging from a vigorous relationship between individuals and their tasks (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Engaged employees show vigor (such as high degrees of energy, emotional flexibility at work and willingness to be committed to their work via determination and persistence, even in the course of challenging occurrences), dedication (for example, a feeling of importance, value, desire, enthusiasm, inspiration, superiority, and demanding), and absorption (e.g. an absolute state of concentrate and passionate involvement in individual's job) (González-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006). Work engagement is significantly related to emotional well-being (Schaufeli, Bakker, & van Rhenen, 2009; Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Khan & Batool, 2018). Equally, work engagement appears to stimulate and inspire ones' work efficiency and organizational occurrence (Dhir & Shukla, 2019). Also, work engagement is linked with insignificant turnover intention (Adekola, 2011; Salahudin et al., 2019).

Schaufeli, Salanova, Bakker, and Alez-rom (2002) expressed work engagement as per a psychological-intellectual situation that involves determination and perseverance, that is not concentrated on a specific condition, individual, or endeavor. As an enthusiastic and energetic psychological condition, engagement supports the employment of resources during mentally difficult conditions (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012; Naidoo, Abarantyne, & Rugimbana, 2019). Studies suggested that work engagement may lower the consequence of stressors, and later protect an individual's psychological and physical health during challenging situations (Hansen, Byrne, & Kiersch, 2014; Jaiswal & Dyaram, 2019). Well engaged persons direct their thinking, beliefs, and attitude to support reach the required organizational goals; individuals are likely to demonstrate more acceptable and less undesirable behavior in the organization

(Consiglio et al., 2016; Malik & Khalid, 2016). Past studies showed evidence that work engagement decreases turnover intention and creates productive employee behavior for instance job satisfaction and organizational engagement including productive individual behaviors, for instance, proactive behavior and departmental citizenship behavior (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Kim, Park, & Kwon, 2017; Naidoo et al., 2019).

The present study proposes that a significant level of work engagement may serve as a possible mediator in the workplace bullying-turnover relationship. The undesirable behaviors and occurrences of stress caused by workplace bullying conduct may be mediated by the degree of work engagement. Therefore, the present study proposes work engagement as a potential mediator between HRM practices and turnover intention. It furthermore suggests work engagement as a potential mediator linking workplace bullying and turnover intention such that academicians with a high occurrence of workplace bullying might lower their turnover intention because of extreme degrees of work engagement.

Finally, with a handful of inconsistencies, just a few studies have taken into account how moderating construct may influence the correlation linking work engagement and employee behaviors for instance turnover intention (e. g. Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2009; Aktar, 2017). Previous studies have unanimously established that work engagement augments the rate with which employees illustrate the level to which individuals intend to stay with the organization (e. g., Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Rich et al., 2010; Malik & Khalid, 2016). Though, (Parker and Griffin (2011) suggested further research is necessary to examine the conditions which may induce the presentation of work engagement on individual behavior. Analyzing the moderating

effect of organizational factors will help to depict the conditions under which work engagement is most likely to result in positive individual responses.

The study responds to Parker and Griffin's (2011) and Dai, Zhuang, and Huan's (2019) call by supporting that the link between work engagement and turnover intention might not be forthright. While an engaged person is passionate and individually devoted to the work, this does not automatically suggest that engaged individuals may consistently act in ways to profit the organization. Background factors in the workplace are expected to affect the extent that engaged individuals choose to stay with the organization. The present study proposes that positive exchange relationships strengthen the relationship and as a result, employees are less likely to engage in turnover intention.

The present study also proposes that perceived supervisor support (PSS) and perceived organizational support (POS) will moderate the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention. Based on the job demand resource (JD-R) theory, the present study proposes that job resources such as POS and PSS are resources with encouraging potentials that may deliver an unquestionable behavior and attitude among individuals. POS and PSS were selected because these constructs demonstrate high degrees of job resources between individuals and their organizations (Maertz-JR, Griffeth, Campbell, & Allen, 2007; Dawley, Houghton, & Bucklew, 2010; Ott, Haun, & Binnewies, 2018). POS represents the relationship the employees have with their organization (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986) and PSS represents the relationship supervisors establish with their subordinates, which is an indication of the supposed quality of the individual-line manager link (Iqbal, Hongyun, Akhtar, Ahmad, & Ankomah, 2020). Finally, the present study examines whether the link between work engagement and turnover intention is moderated by both POS and PSS.

The turnover intention has become a significant challenge faced by organizations, the study proposes that both HRM practices and workplace bullying are important factors that affect employee turnover intention. The study suggests that one of the important antecedents for turnover intention is work engagement. It was observed that POS and PSS are forerunners of work engagement, which influence turnover intention. Since employees are a critical component of any organization, effort must put to increase POS and PSS, to make them more engaged and satisfied, which signals healthier organization and lower turnover intention. Hence, the present study proposes that work engagement may intervene in the link between workplace bullying, HRM practices, and turnover intention in the top 10 public universities in Nigeria. Also, POS and PSS will moderate the correlation linking work engagement and turnover intention such that the correlation becomes more negative for the employee who sees high POS and PSS.

1.2 Problem Statement

Public universities are identified by the Nigerian government as one major area that can help in the transformation of Nigeria (Bogoro, 2019; Omale et al., 2017; onah & Anikwe, 2016; National Universities Commission, 2019). In an effort to transform Nigeria into a developed country by the year 2030, the Nigerian government suggests that the main responsibility of the education sector is to developed human capital with the right knowledge, skills, and attitude to bring Nigeria to success story, and that the public universities are key in achieving this Nigeria's Vision 2030 (National Universities commission, 2019).

In view of the vital role played by the public universities, it is essential that these universities are staffed by academicians that are willing to perform and remain with the

public universities. However, Bogoro (2019) indicated that the level of engagement of academicians working in the public universities in Nigeria varies significantly. Work engagement has been found to influence turnover intention among employees (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Furthermore, public universities have continued to face the problem of high turnover rate among its academicians (Onah & Anikwe, 2016). The average turnover rate of public universities was found to be 18.3% with an increasing turnover rate in the top ten public universities in Nigeria to 23%. Another study on turnover intention of public universities in Nigeria revealed that the turnover intention of academicians in one of the top ten public universities had increased from 15% in 2014 to 23% in 2018, which is higher than the private universities (Tabiu, 2019). The survey indicated that more academicians are likely to leave the universities within the next two years (Bogoro, 2019). These results suggest that turnover intention issue of academicians should be treated seriously, particularly in public universities in Nigeria. Overall, in the Nigerian education sector, the average turnover rate is reported as around 23.28% between September 2018 to August 2019 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020), being the second highest rate after hotel/restaurant sector (24.4%). Most of the turnover in the education industry occurred within public universities in Nigeria (Bogoro, 2019; Tabiu, 2019; Omeluzer, 2018).

Factors affecting turnover of academicians are found to be related to poor HRM practices and workplace bullying. Many academicians are not satisfied with the limited career development and promotion opportunities in the public universities in Nigeria, unattractive remuneration, high workload, and inadequate support for research activities (Omale et al., 2017; Onah & Anikwe, 2016; Tabiu, 2019). Other determinants of the high rate of turnover intention are poor supervision and training opportunities (Abubakar & Abdullahi, 2017; Ajayi & Olatunji, 2017).

Furthermore, many academicians perceived the inadequate supportive work environment towards their career development (Adedayo & Ishola, 2018). They experience high level of workload, intimidations, persistent criticism, and repeated reminders of their errors (Nwachukwu & Chladkova, 2017). Hence, most academicians perceived academic job as lack of support from supervisors/management and possesses high level of workload (Balakrishan, 2014).

The high rate of turnover and turnover intention causes many problems to the management, the lecturers and the students. The management has to spend money, time, and energy to recruit new academicians to replace those who turnover. Additionally, problems such as discontinuity in carrying out the teaching tasks, the need to take up more teaching loads, and inability of new academicians to meet the student's expectations have jeopardized the quality of services given by academicians in the top ten public universities in Nigeria. Hence there is a need to look into the problem of turnover intention among academicians in the top ten public universities in Nigeria, so that more effective strategies can be utilized to reduce the turnover intention among the academicians in the top ten public universities in Nigeria.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

1. To examine the relationship between HRM practices (training and development, performance appraisal, recruitment, career recognition, and reward recognition) and turnover intention.
2. To investigate the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention.

3. To identify if work engagement mediates the relationship between HRM practices (training and development, performance appraisal, recruitment, career recognition, and reward recognition) and turnover intention.
4. To identify if work engagement mediates the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention.
5. To examine if **perceived organizational support** (POS) and perceived supervisor support (PSS) moderate the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention.

1.4 Research Questions

The study aims to answer the research questions below:

1. Do HRM practices (training and development, performance appraisal, recruitment, career recognition, and reward recognition) have a negative relationship with turnover intention?
2. Does workplace bullying have a positive relationship with turnover intention?
3. Does work engagement **test** the relationship between HRM practices (training and development, performance appraisal, recruitment, career recognition, and reward recognition) and turnover intention?
4. Does work engagement **test** the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention?
5. Do perceived organizational support and supervisor support moderate the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study can be viewed from theoretical, practical and methodological aspects in the area of turnover intention among academicians in the top 10 public universities in Nigeria.

1.5.1 Theoretical significance

Firstly, the present research helps to enrich the literature on turnover intention issues. Henny et al. (2014) mentioned that there is scarcity of research on turnover intention within the tertiary institutions. This is further seconded by Watts and Robertson (2011) who claimed that the studies on turnover intention across the universities in Nigeria are limited. Hence, this study takes the initiative to examine the turnover intention among academicians from the top 10 public universities in Nigeria. Besides, different antecedents, such as HRM practices, workplace bullying, work engagement, perceived organizational support, and perceived supervisor support used in this study as the predictors of turnover intention among academicians in the top 10 public universities in Nigeria so that the literature on turnover intention is embellished with new perspectives. Consequently, the findings of this study could serve as a guideline and reference to other researchers who are interested in this turnover intention related issue. Moreover, the application of work engagement into the working conditions of the top 10 public universities in Nigeria may enlighten the future researchers to have a good idea and better understanding regarding the mechanisms in lowering turnover intention among workers in tertiary institutions or any workforce within Nigeria.

Secondly, this study becomes significant through the use of the social exchange theory and JD-R theory by inspecting the effects of HRM practices and

workplace bullying among top 10 public universities academicians in a comprehensive research framework. Westman et al., (2005) recommended that researchers should enrich the SET theory by developing on any contemporary research with the examination of various variables. As a result, HRM practices, workplace bullying, work engagement, perceived organizational support, and perceived supervisor support are used to contribute to the body of knowledge in the SET theory and JD-R theory.

Thirdly, this study is also significant through the testing of mediating role of work engagement between the independent variables and dependent variable. Based on call for the examination of potential mediators between HRM practices, workplace bullying, and Turnover intention (Idris et al., 2011), the indirect effects between HRM practices and workplace bullying via work engagement as a mediator, are investigated in this study. As a result, a better understanding is obtained about the causal mechanism behind the relationships between the independent variables and dependent variable, through the examination on work engagement as a mediator. Build on the recommendations by Cavanaugh et al (2018) the present study also takes the initiative to introduced perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support as moderators. Moreover, Lesener et al. (2019) also suggested that the different influences of HRM practices and workplace bullying on work engagement should be further explored. Hence, this study employs both perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support as the moderators to examine the interaction between work engagement and turnover intention. As a result, a better understanding is obtained about the causal interaction behind the relationships between the mediating variable and dependent variable, through the examination on perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support as the moderators.

Finally, the researcher believes that this study makes an important contribution towards the literature on turnover intention of academicians' in the top 10 public universities in Nigeria. By integrating the theoretical views of Social Exchange and Job Demands-Resources theories, this study offers better understanding on the mechanism on how both HRM practices and workplace bullying have influence on turnover intention via mediating role of work engagement and the moderating roles of POS and PSS.

1.5.2 Practical significance

This study intends to decrease the turnover intention level among academicians from the top 10 public universities in Nigeria. Both the top 10 public universities management and policy-makers would be interested to find out the way in decreasing the turnover intention level among academicians, which eventually ensuring the formation of world-class public universities. It is thus practically substantial to investigate the predictors of turnover intention so that effective interference and efficient policies can be enacted by the policy-makers to decrease the turnover intention level among academicians of the top 10 public universities in Nigeria.

Focusing the context of this study, particularly within the top 10 public universities in Nigeria, should give a greater apprehension to the top 10 public universities practitioners on the predictors of turnover intention occurrence among academicians (Boswell, Ren & Hinrichs, 2008). This study should be beneficial to the top ten public universities management and policy-makers by stimulating them to reduce the workplace bullying and increase POS/PSS in the top 10 public universities working environment. Furthermore, Singh, Goolsby and Rhoads (1994) mentioned that workplace bullying may not be destructively malfunctioned, but the aggregate of

various bullying negative acts may surpass the resources (POS/PSS) available for an individual to deal with bullying negative acts at work, which subsequently lead to low levels of work engagement and high turnover intention. Hence, this study is anticipated to give insights to the top 10 public universities in Nigeria on how POS/PSS, which serves as a job resource, promotes a better working environment through social exchange, which in turn enhancing the work engagement level and ultimately leading to low level of turnover intention among academicians. Therefore, directly and indirectly, in-depth POS/PSS contexts should result in reduced turnover intention. Although it is very well acknowledged for the impact of workplace bullying and HRM practices on employee turnover intention and performance (Demerouti, Verbeke & Bakker, 2005; Bakker, Van Emmerik & Van Riet, 2008) the measurement of HRM practices and workplace bullying could offer a useful tool to help in the change of management practices of the top 10 public universities in Nigeria and consecutively reduce the academic staff' workplace bullying.

Besides, though bullying prevention strategies nowadays are becoming more popular in organizations (Noblet & LaMontagne, 2006), critics about current practices of these strategies implied that they focus too much on the organization rather than the individual. Hence, building a strong HRM practices is favored since it is the key role to increase academicians' levels of work engagement.

In terms of management perspective, the public universities management or policy-makers may be beneficial with the application of HRM practices and workplace bullying into the job design of academicians. Moreover, this study also provides insights to practitioners on the implications of HRM practices and workplace bullying on work engagement. With that, the top 10 public universities management can gather the ideas from this study regarding the way to increase the work engagement level

among academicians through the manipulation of HRM practices and policies on workplace bullying.

Lastly, this study prepares the top 10 public universities management with awareness whether elevating work engagement could help to reduce the turnover intention level among academicians. In conjunction with that, the top 10 public universities management and policy-makers can identify the factors to reduce the turnover intention level and hence allowing them to take corrective steps in order to preserve the benefits of the top 10 public universities.

1.5.3 Methodological significance

This study also offers a few methodological significances by employing partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) and the bootstrapping technique to examine the hypothesized relationships in this model.

Foremost, PLS-SEM is considered as suitable preference for statistical analysis due to its ability in maximizing explained variance in the dependent variable; working perfectly with complex model; imposing lesser requirements on the data normality and having stronger statistical power (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2011). Moreover, it is demonstrated that majority of the behavioral studies do not fulfil the normality requirement (Micceri, 1989; Peng & Lai, 2012) and still, the PLS-SEM results are robust despite the data are greatly skewed (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena, 2012; Peng & Lai, 2012). Thus, the employment of PLS-SEM is justified in the present study.

Next, certain findings can only be discovered with the application of PLS-SEM which would not be revealed with the use of multiple regression. This is because PLS-SEM rather than multiple regression can provide more predictive accuracy and a

lesser risk of chance correlation (Cramer, 1993). As a consequence, the use of PLS-SEM is foreseen to provide not only extra methodological significance to the turnover intention level among academicians in the top 10 public universities in Nigeria, but also interesting additional findings.

Last but not least, the bootstrapping technique rather than the causal procedure by Baron and Kenny (1986) or Sobel test is used in this study to test the mediation effects. Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2017) noted that researchers should follow Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2008) to bootstrap the sampling distribution of the indirect effect when testing mediating effects. They further added that this method works well for simple and multiple mediator models. Moreover, the bootstrapping technique is perceived to be utterly fit for PLS-SEM due to the absence of assumption made about the shape of the constructs' distribution, or the sampling distribution of the statistics and hence, this makes bootstrapping technique applicable to small sample sizes (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Hair et al., 2017). With that, it is concluded that the application of the bootstrapping approach contributes methodologically significant to this present study.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focused on empirical investigation of turnover intention among academicians in the top ten universities in Nigeria. This was conducted to understand the predicting role of factors at the individual level (HRM practices and workplace bullying) on turnover intention. Next the study explored the mediating role of work engagement on the relationship between HRM practices, workplace bullying and turnover intention, as well as the moderating role of perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support on the relationship between work engagement and