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## **Perceived organisational support, job satisfaction and turnover intention in the developing context: moderating role of emotional intelligence**

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**Abstract:** Given the high cost of not being able to retain academic staff, and lack of theoretical and empirical analysis with regards to emotional intelligence in the developing countries, the current study investigated the moderating role of emotional intelligence on perceived organisational support, job satisfaction and academic staff turnover intention. The study used a quantitative approach with cross-sectional research design. A self administered questionnaire was used to collect data from 368 academic staff members. Partial least squares-structural equation (PLS-SEM) was used to analyse the data. The overall findings of the study revealed a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and academic staff turnover intention, but not in perceived organisational support. Furthermore, emotional intelligence was found to moderate the relationships between job satisfaction, perceived organisational support and academic staff turnover intention. The current study's findings emphasise the significance of emotional intelligence in improving job satisfaction, perceived organisational support and turnover intention-relationships.

**Keywords:** perceived organisational support; POS; job satisfaction; emotional intelligence; turnover intention.

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## 1 Introduction

Academic staff remains one of the most valuable resources in the university system, and failure to effectively manage, maintain, and retain them may result in knowledge breakdown and intellectual loss. It has been noted that academics contribute significantly to the advancement of higher education (Yusuf et al., 2017), the achievement of the education for all (EFA) goal, and the advancement of Nigeria's socioeconomic growth (Adeniji et al., 2018). Scholars (e.g., Abdulraheem and Adebola, 2014; Salau et al., 2020) have argued that adequate retention of academic staff in higher education institutions facilitates growth and strengthens the educational system. This implies that the quantity and quality of academic staff play a significant role in determining the success of the university system. However, academic staff turnover has become a serious issue in the university system, particularly in developing nations such as Nigeria.

According to Yousaf (2010), developed countries are better at retaining employees than developing countries. Researchers (e.g., Abdulraheem and Adebola, 2014; Adedeji and Ugwumadu, 2018; Raji et al., 2018) attest to high levels of employee turnover in developing countries like Nigeria. In support of this claim, Omonijo et al. (2015) stated that, despite numerous studies on employee turnover, the Nigerian education system continues to struggle with teaching staff retention. According to Salau et al. (2020), the high rate at which academic staff in Nigeria engages in industrial action and resigns from their jobs has posed serious problems for university administration and government since 1980. Furthermore, Alo and Dada (2020) recently stated that a number of Nigerian universities have lost many academic staff members to other job opportunities due various issues surrounding their job.

More importantly, academic staff turnover causes enormous problems to the system. These include increased recruitment costs, disruptions in academic activity, low educational quality, gaps in academic planning, and the loss of knowledgeable and experienced lecturers, as well as an increase in time and cost of training novice academics, all of which have a serious effect on the quality of services and the institution's image (Pienaar and Bester, 2008; Ng'ethe et al., 2012). Given the costs involved, it is critical to investigate variables associated with turnover intention (TI) in order to promote quality education while minimising turnover costs (Lisa et al., 2017).

In view of this, extant literature has identified antecedents to employee TI. These antecedents include job satisfaction (Chin, 2018; Grissom et al., 2012; Hassan and Mara, 2014; Yarbrough et al., 2016) perceived organisational support (POS) (DeConinck and

Johnson, 2009; Imran et al., 2014; Nadeem et al., 2019) career development (Kroon and Freese, 2013; Presbitero et al., 2016; Yarbrough et al., 2016) psychological contract (Blomme et al., 2010; Kickul and Lester, 2001; Umar, 2016) job stress (e.g., Arshadi and Damiri, 2013; Chiang and Chang, 2012; Siddiqui and Jamil, 2015), perceived organisational justice (Azami et al., 2016; Gim and Mat Desa, 2014; Khalid et al., 2018), organisational commitment (Jehanzeb et al., 2013; Tarigan and Ariani, 2015; Tnay et al., 2013). However, among all the antecedents to employee TI, POS and job satisfaction have been identified as key antecedents (Nadeem et al., 2019; Wang and Wang, 2020). This is due to the fact that both POS and job satisfaction are important sources of socio-emotional needs, and when an organisation fails to address them, employee attitudes and behaviours at work suffer noticeably (Liu et al., 2018).

Nonetheless, little or no research has been conducted on the role of employee personality in the contextual existence of POS and job satisfaction in relation to employee TI (Maan et al., 2020). Furthermore, some POS factors, such as justice, organisational rewards, and job conditions, have been reported to differ across cultures (Treglown et al., 2018). Job satisfaction, on the other hand, may not significantly reduce employee negative attitudes or enhance helping behaviour in an organisational context without taken into consideration personality configuration of individual employee (Awal et al., 2020; Feyerabend et al., 2018). As a result, this study considers emotional intelligence (EI) as a key employee personality trait that may reduce further negative employee attitudes, particularly in academic settings. Specifically, studies (e.g., Da Camera et al., 2015; Kasim et al., 2016; Shukla and Srivastava, 2016) have provided theoretical support to explicate the linkage between EI, employee attitudes, but no research has been undertaken with regards to the role of EI in understanding the influence of POS, job satisfaction on employee attitudes (such as TI) in the university system of developing nations.

Besides, there appears to be a scarcity of studies on POS, job satisfaction, and TI in educational settings, particularly in developing countries, as the majority of studies on the subject have been conducted in industrial settings (Chin, 2018; Wang and Wang, 2020; Wong and Wong, 2017). According to Nsanzumuhire and Groot (2020), contextual socioeconomic differences in income, education, and social supports have been found between developing and developed countries, particularly in the university settings. In addition, there are substantial numbers of studies on POS, job satisfaction, and TI-relationships that are still debated in the literature (Liu et al., 2015; Mohd Zin, 2017). For instance, some scholars (e.g., Ahmad et al., 2014; Wong and Wong, 2017) have established that POS and job satisfaction may not directly impact employee attitudes. In this sense, the study aims to look into the role of EI in explaining POS, job satisfaction and academic staff TI-relationships in the developing context. The rest of the paper is devoted to literature review, theoretical foundations, hypotheses development, methodology, data analysis, discussion, and conclusion.

## **2 Literature review, theoretical foundations and hypotheses development**

This section discusses the variables of this study (i.e., POS, job satisfaction, EI and TI) and the relationships between them in order to develop the study's hypotheses. It also explains how EI can act as a moderator in the relationships.

## 2.1 *Turnover intention*

Employee turnover is one of the most difficult challenges for human resource managers and a major research topic for academics (Bratton and Gold, 2012; Chan and Ao, 2019). Employee turnover is defined as the voluntary and permanent withdrawal of employees from organisations. However, TI is regarded as more relevant in the field of behavioural and management studies than actual turnover because it is psychological, cognitive, and behavioural in nature and can thus be influenced by a variety of external factors (Griffeth et al., 2010). Furthermore, it is practically impossible to study actual turnover behaviour because employees who have left organisations are difficult to track down and, in most cases, the response rate to surveys is quite low (Johnsrud and Rosser, 2002). For these reasons, many researchers regard TI as the best predictor of actual turnover, and it can thus be used as a proxy for turnover (Allen et al., 2010; Ma and Trigo, 2008; Steel and Lounsbury, 2009).

Lee et al. (2008) defines TI as an employee's subjective perception of leaving their current job for other opportunities. According to Matz et al. (2014), TI is defined as the conscious and deliberate intent to leave an organisation. This suggests that TI is a behavioural expectation that occurs prior to the actual turnover. For the purposes of this study, TI is defined as an employee's conscious and deliberate attempt to leave his or her current job voluntarily. TI may have a negative impact on the organisation, especially if it is higher than expected. For example, TI is associated with direct costs such as additional costs of replacement, employment, management, recruitment, and selection, as well as indirect costs such as low morale, pressure on other employees, poor service quality, and loss of social capital (Griffin and Moorhead, 2011).

## 2.2 *Perceived organisational support*

According to Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), POS is employees' subjective perception of how the organisation values every effort they make toward achieving its goals, as well as how their well-being is cared of. Similarly, Dawley et al. (2010) define POS as the extent to which employees perceive that their contributions are valued by the organisation and that the organisation cares about their well-being. According to organisational support theory (OST), people's contributions at work are influenced by how much they believe their organisation cares about their well-being. As a result, when employees feel undervalued and unappreciated by their employers, they are more likely to engage in negative and counterproductive behaviours such as absenteeism, high intent to leave, and decreased productivity, among others (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

Eder and Eisenberger (2008) stated that individuals will be motivated to meet their exchange obligations and remain more fully engaged in their work, when they have perceived more supports from workplace. Hence, POS should meet specific employee needs, such as respect, acceptance, emotional support, and appreciation (Armeli et al., 1998). Employees' expectations of being cared for and valued by their organisations improve their trust in the organisations' ability to approve, reward, and appreciate their attitudes and behaviours. Organisational rewards can come in two ways: informal (e.g., praise or counselling) and formal (e.g., promotion or pay increase) (Wayne et al., 1997). Dawley et al. (2010) suggest that organisational support is most effective when employees and employers participate in social exchanges that benefit all parties. For example, in exchange for salaries, benefits, and recognition of work performance,

organisations expected employees to work hard, stay dedicated and committed, and to remain with their organisations with no intent to leave the organisation.

### *2.3 Job satisfaction*

Job satisfaction is regarded as one of the most extensively researched work-related attitudes variables in the literature (Alam and Asim, 2019; Dicks and Ferrin, 2002; Ghada et al., 2017; Mitterer, 2017). Spector (1997) defined job satisfaction as “the degree to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs”. Job satisfaction refers to an employee’s overall positive feelings about his or her job (Sailaja and Naik, 2016). To Tomažević et al. (2014), job satisfaction can be understood in terms of its relationships with other key factors, such as general well-being, stress at work, control at work, home-work interface, and working conditions. Therefore, job satisfaction is an emotional reaction to a job condition that is often determined by how well an employee’s expectations at work are in tune with outcomes (Khan et al., 2017; Manzoor et al., 2011).

According to Hulin and Judge (2003), job satisfaction includes multidimensional psychological responses to an individual’s job, and these personal responses have cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. According to them, affective job satisfaction is a subjective construct that represents an emotional feeling that individuals have about their job, whereas cognitive job satisfaction is a more objective and logical evaluation of various aspects of a job. However, the behavioural component is concerned with how employees act or react to their jobs. This means that employee job satisfaction is affected by a variety of factors.

### *2.4 Emotional intelligence*

EI has long been a source of concern among researchers. The study of EI has evolved over the years, but predominately researched in 1990 with the publication of the first paper on the subject. The research on EI is commonly conceptualised using two major theoretical models: trait and ability models. The trait model of EI considers it a lower-order personality construct in which individuals tend to manage their emotions, whereas the ability model defines EI as the ability to perceive, assimilate, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others (Mayer et al., 2016). However, because of its proclivity not only to manage one’s own emotions but also those of others, this study adopts the ability model of EI.

Ravichandran et al. (2011) defined EI as “the ability to identify, comprehend, and assess one’s own and others’ feelings, and to employ this information in thought and action”. According to Mayer et al. (2000), EI entails self-awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy, and interpersonal relationships. Mayer and Salovey (1993) classified EI into four components. First, *self-emotions appraisal (SEA)*: this component reflects a person’s ability to understand and express his or her own emotions, as well as apply that knowledge to produce positive outcomes. Second, *other emotions appraisal (OEA)*: This component evaluates an individual’s ability to observe and comprehend the emotions of others. A person with a high level of capability in this components will be able to observe and predict the emotions of others. Third, *use of emotion (UOE)*: This component assesses an individual’s ability to access, generate, and use emotions to improve personal performance. People with high ratings in this ability will be able to quickly return to normal psychological states after experiencing depression or being

upset. Fourth, *regulation of emotions (ROE)*: This is an individual's ability to control his or her emotions in order to achieve a desired outcome and to remain psychologically balanced while solving problems. Therefore, the ability to understand one's own emotions as well as those of others, and to regulate them by applying the knowledge to achieve positive outcomes, is a characteristic of someone with high EI.

## 2.5 *POS and employee TI*

Several empirical evidences (for example, Akgunduz and Sanli, 2017; Ahmad et al., 2014; Chaudhary et al., 2015; Nadeem et al., 2019; Treglown et al., 2018; Wang and Wang, 2020) have demonstrated that POS significantly impact TI. Moreover, substantial evidence has indicated that employees that receive high level of supports are less likely to leave their organisations (Choi and Chiu, 2017; Eisenberger et al., 2016). They discovered that employees who perceive adequate support from their organisation are more likely to have a positive outlook on their organisation and, as a result, have a lower intention to quit. Furthermore, Akgunduz and Sanli (2017) asserted that POS is an important factor that employees consider when deciding whether to leave or stay in the organisation. This suggests that POS has the potential to instil in employees a sense of obligation to their employer.

The relationship between POS and employee TI can be explained theoretically using social exchange theory (SET) and reciprocity norm theory (RNT). SET and RNT are based on the idea that both employers and employees can be emotionally committed to each other in such a way that positive attitudes and behaviours are reinforced (Eisenberger et al., 1997). For example, according to SET, people assess the overall worth of a relationship by deducting the cost (contributions) from the rewards (benefits) obtained (Blau, 1964). Employees who have a positive perception about their organisations are more likely to exhibit positive behaviours toward their employers (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). People, according to RNT, feel a sense of responsibility for those who assist them and respond positively for that reason (Gouldner, 1960). This suggests that in an organisational context, employees who perceive more support from organisations have a higher positive mood at work and a lower intention to leave (Loi et al., 2006).

Based on the aforementioned arguments, it is hypothesised that:

H<sub>1</sub> There is a significant negative relationship between POS and academic staff TI.

## 2.6 *Job satisfaction and employee TI*

Substantial number of empirical studies (e.g., Ali Jadoo et al., 2015; Khan et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2017; Park and Cho, 2020; Li et al., 2019) have claimed that job satisfaction is an important driver of employee turnover. Similarly, Park and Cho (2020) conducted a study to find out the impact of job satisfaction on turnover intent and intention to stay of dentists in Korea. The findings revealed that job satisfaction influences Korean dentists' intentions to leave and stay to a large extent. Similarly to Park and Cho (2020), Deng et al. (2021) discovered that job satisfaction is inversely related to intention to leave. Many studies have also discovered job satisfaction to be an important variable in reducing negative and counterproductive employee behaviours in an organisational context (Ahmad et al., 2014; Ismail and Abdrazak, 2016; Tarigan and Ariani, 2015).

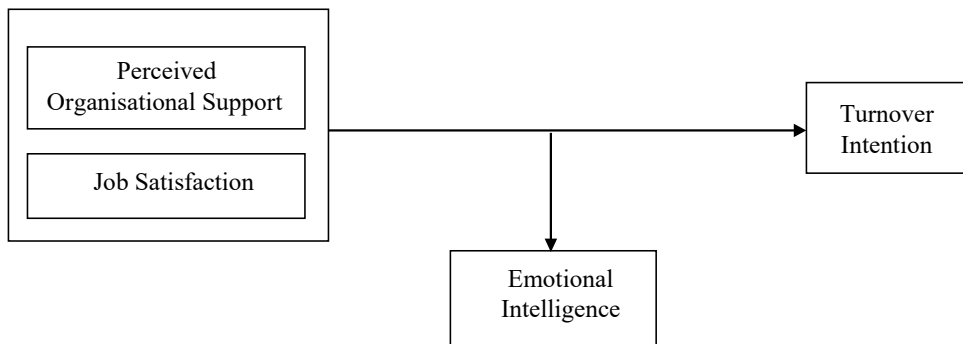
More so, drawing upon SET, individuals should help those who have helped them, and over time, they may come to expect others to reciprocate such good behaviour (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). This suggests that individuals who are satisfied with their jobs may feel obligated to reciprocate in a positive way. Employees' positive reciprocal acts may include loyalty to the organisation, resulting in a lower intention to leave (Albalawi et al., 2019; Raji and Aliyu, 2018). In contrast, if employees believed otherwise, they may be more likely to leave (Suryawan et al., 2021). In line with the above arguments and justifications, it is hypothesised that:

H<sub>2</sub> There is a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and TI.

### 2.7 Moderating role of EI

According to EI theorists, EI is a system of interrelated behaviour that stems from emotional and social competencies. They contend that these competencies have the greatest potential to improve performance and employee job satisfaction (Zineldin, 2017). This is due to the fact that employees with higher EI are more competent and satisfied with their jobs than employees with lower EI. Shooshtarian et al. (2013) also asserted that employees' EI has an impact on their job satisfaction, performance, and commitment. This is because emotionally intelligent employees are less affected by external factors and are better at managing their emotions. Previous studies (e.g., Akhtar et al., 2017; Giao et al., 2020; Riaz et al., 2018) have found a link between EI and employee intention to quit. They claim that an employee who is high on EI is less likely to quit an organisation. This suggests that employees who are emotionally intelligent will be able to psychologically adjust to workplace situational factors irrespective of challenges facing them.

**Figure 1** Model of the study



Source: The researcher

According to Pradhan and Jena (2018), an individual with high EI has good mental health and can control his or her emotions when confronted with difficult, unsupportive, or unpleasant situations at work or in personal life. Giao et al. (2020) also claim that EI influence employee intention to quit and perceptions of organisational support. Slaski and Cartwright (2002) maintain that emotionally intelligent people build strong relationships with stakeholders and co-workers. People with high EI are more positive and optimistic, which allows them to seek solutions rather than complain about failure (Da Camera et al.,



2015; Besharat, 2005). Thus, if high emotionally intelligent employees perceive low support and satisfaction with their jobs, they are more likely to stay than low emotionally intelligent employees, while turnover rates are reduced. As a result, it is reasonable to assume that EI may moderate or attenuate the effects of POS and job satisfaction, resulting in a decrease in TI. Based on the preceding arguments and exposition, it is thus hypothesised that:

H<sub>3</sub> EI moderates the relationship between POS and TI.

H<sub>4</sub> EI moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and TI.

### **3 Methodology**

#### *3.1 Research design*

This study uses a quantitative research approach to examine the structural relationships between four constructs: TI, POS, job satisfaction, and EI. Quantitative research quantifies and interprets data through the use of statistical analysis techniques (Bhatti et al., 2012). Specifically, the design was cross-sectional in which data were collected only once throughout the entire study. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), the design is less time consuming and cost effective than the longitudinal research design.

#### *3.2 Population*

Based on the Report of the Needs Assessment of Nigerian Universities as of 2020, there were 8,753 academic staff members in seven federally owned universities in south-west Nigeria. Hence, the targeted population of this study was 8,735 academic staff members.

#### *3.3 Sample size*

The study determined a sample size of 368 based on the target population. This is consistent with Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table and Hair et al.'s (2014) supposition. Hence, 368 copies of questionnaire were administered across the seven federal universities in south-west Nigeria.

#### *3.4 Data collection method and process*

The survey research was the method used to collect data in this study via a self-administered questionnaire. The method is most suitable because it is commonly utilised by organisational researchers who seek to collect data on a broad population that cannot be observed first-hand (Keeter, 2005). The data was collected between 3rd week of July and 1st week of August 2021 via self-administered questionnaire.

#### *3.5 Response rate*

The overall response rate was (346) 95.4% while the valid response rate was (343) 93.2%. According to Sekaran (2013), a minimum response rate of 30% is adequate for a

survey; thus, it can be stated that the response rate of this study is appropriate and satisfactory for further analysis.

**Table 1** Response rate analysis

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency/rate</i>
No. of distributed copies of questionnaire	368
No. of returned copies of questionnaire	346
No of returned and usable copies of questionnaire	343
No. of returned copies of questionnaire but non-usable	3
No. of copies of questionnaire not returned	22
Response rate	94.0%
Valid response rate	93.2%

### 3.6 *Sampling procedures*

In this study, simple random sampling, one of the probability sampling procedures, was used. In a simple random sampling technique, each member of a population has an equal chance of being chosen as a subject. The simple random sampling method was used for this study because it has the least bias and provides the most generalisability because any element can be included in the sample (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). As a result, the researchers followed standard procedures, by using a spreadsheet (ms-excel) computer application to generate random sample size numbers from the population, while respondents were chosen at random (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

### 3.7 *Unit of analysis*

The study’s unit of analysis was an individual because the study’s target population was individual academic staff members from federal universities across southwest Nigeria.

### 3.8 *Method of data analysis*

The partial least squares-structural equation model (PLS-SEM) was used to analyse data in this study. Hair et al. (2011) recommend using measurement and structural model approaches (i.e., a two-stage approach) in SmartPLS 3 to generate valid and accurate results. The measurement model corresponds to the indicators of the latent variables, whereas the structural model depicts the relationship between the latent variables (Hair et al., 2014).

### 3.9 *Measures*

Table 2 shows the results of a three-item scale developed by Sjoberg and Sverke (2000) to assess the intention to stay. For instance, ‘I am actively looking for a new job’ is an example of an item used in the study. POS was measured using Eisenberger et al.’s (1997) eight-item scale. ‘My organisation strongly considers my goals and values’ is an example of an item that has been adapted and used for POS. Job satisfaction was measured using a seven-item scale adapted from MacDonald and MacIntyre’s (1997)

overall job satisfaction scale. An example of item considered is ‘I feel good about working in this university’. Finally, eight items from Wong and Law’s (2002) EI Scale were adapted. The scale has four dimensions: appraising one’s own emotions, others’ emotions, showing emotions and regulating emotions. An example of item considered is ‘I am well-aware of my own emotions’. Finally, all of the items were measured using a five-Likert scale, with 5 signifying ‘strongly agree’ and 1 signifying ‘strongly disagree’.

**Table 2** Construct measurement

<i>Construct</i>	<i>No of items</i>	<i>Source</i>
Turnover intention	3	Sjoberg and Sverke (2000)
POS	8	Eisenberger et al. (1997)
Job satisfaction	7	MacDonald and MacIntyre (1997)
EI	8	Wong and Law (2002)

## 4 Data analysis and results

### 4.1 Demographic profile of the respondents

The descriptive data of respondents are shown in Table 2. According to the age distribution of the respondents, 16.3% are under the age of 30, 17.5% are between the ages of 30 and 40, 30.6% are between the ages of 40 and 50, and 35.6% are over the age of 50. This indicates that the majority of respondents are over the age of 50. Furthermore, male respondents account for 65% of total responses, while females account for 35% of the sample. This supports the fact that men make up the majority of the working population in Nigeria. In addition, 18.1% are lecturer 1, 40.5% are senior lecturers, 25.7% are reader/associate professors, and 15.7% are professors. The reason for choosing academic staff from the lecturer 1 cadre down to professor is that those cadres are believed to have at least three years of university teaching experience. As a result, they are best placed to provide accurate, adequate, and relevant information about the study. Finally, 12.5% have worked in the university system for 0–5 years, 46.7% for 6–10 years, 31.2% for 11–15 years, and 9.6% for more than 15 years. This demonstrates that the study’s respondents have more experience in the university system.

**Table 3** Demographic statistics

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage</i>
Age distribution			
Less than 30	56	16.3	16.3
30–40	60	17.5	33.8
40–50	105	30.6	64.4
Above 50	122	35.6	100.0
Gender			
Male	222	65.0	61.8
Female	121	35.0	100.0

**Table 3** Demographic statistics (continued)

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
<b>Designation/job title</b>			
Lecturer 1	62	18.1	18.1
Senior Lecturer	139	40.5	58.6
Reader/Associate Professor	88	25.7	84.3
Professor	54	15.7	100.0
<b>Work experience</b>			
0–5 years	43	12.5	12.5
6–10 years	160	46.7	59.2
11–15 years	107	31.2	90.4
15 years above	33	9.6	100.0

4.2 Measurement model evaluation (outer model)

The measurement model explains how each construct is measured, which can be validated by assessing items indicator, internal consistency reliability, and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017) as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2** Measurement model (see online version for colours)

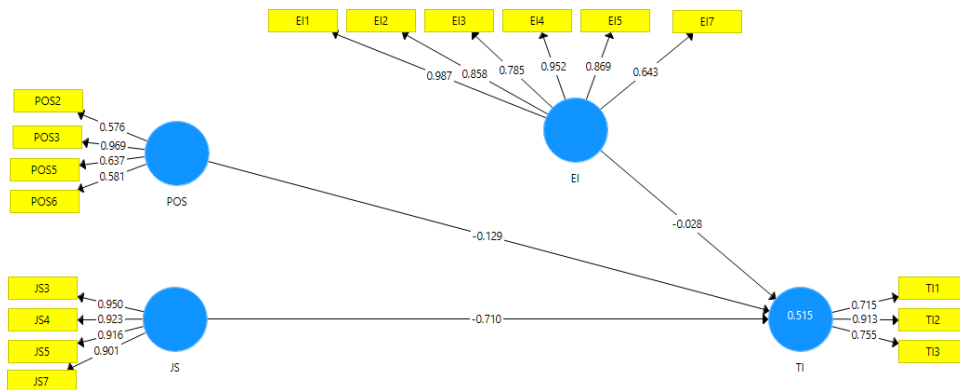


Table 4 and Figure 2 depict the outer loadings (indicator reliability) of each item used to measure the study constructs. The reliability of an indicator refers to how well an item measure a specific construct consistently (Hair et al., 2010). Hair et al. (2014) suggested that the threshold value for an outer loading indicator is 0.5. Table 4 and Figure 2 show that individual indicator reliability was achieved, with item loading values ranging from 0.576 to 0.987. Items such as POS1, POS4, POS7, POS8, JS1, JS2, JS6, JS8, E6 and EI8) that failed to meet the required value of 0.5 were deleted (Hair et al., 2011).

Table 4 also depicts each construct’s internal consistency and reliability. Internal consistency reliability (construct reliability) assesses the relationship between scores with regards to items measuring similar construct (Hair et al., 2017). CA and CR are normally evaluated to check for reliability. According to Hair et al. (2017), the least value for both

CA and CR is 0.7. In this study, CR and CA values are higher than the 0.7 cut-off. As a result, consistency reliability has been confirmed.

**Table 4** Reliability and validity

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Loadings</i>	<i>CA</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>			
POS	POS2	0.576	0.794	0.794	0.504			
	POS3	0.969						
	POS5	0.637						
	POS6	0.581						
Job satisfaction	JS3	0.950	0.942	0.958	0.851			
	JS4	0.923						
	JS5	0.916						
	JS7	0.901						
Emotional intelligence	EI1	0.987	0.929	0.942	0.734			
	EI2	0.858						
	EI3	0.785						
	EI4	0.952						
	EI5	0.869				0.713	0.839	0.638
	EI7	0.642						
Turnover intention	TI1	0.715						
	TI2	0.915						
	TI3	0.755						

Notes: AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability; CA = Cronbach's alpha.

**Table 5** Discriminant validity (HTMT criterion)

	<i>EI</i>	<i>JS</i>	<i>POS</i>	<i>TI</i>
EI				
JS	0.101			
POS	0.130	0.103		
TI	0.113	0.839	0.107	

Notes: JS = job satisfaction; POS = perceived organisational support; EI = emotional intelligence; TI = turnover intention.

It is also important to assess convergent validity. Convergent validity, as defined by Hair et al. (2017), is the degree at which a measure shows positive connection with other measures of the same construct and can be confirmed through the assessment of AVE. The minimum value for AVE according to Hair et al. (2011) is placed at 0.5. As shown in Table 4, AVE values exceed the required value of 0.5. Hence, this confirms the convergent validity of this study.

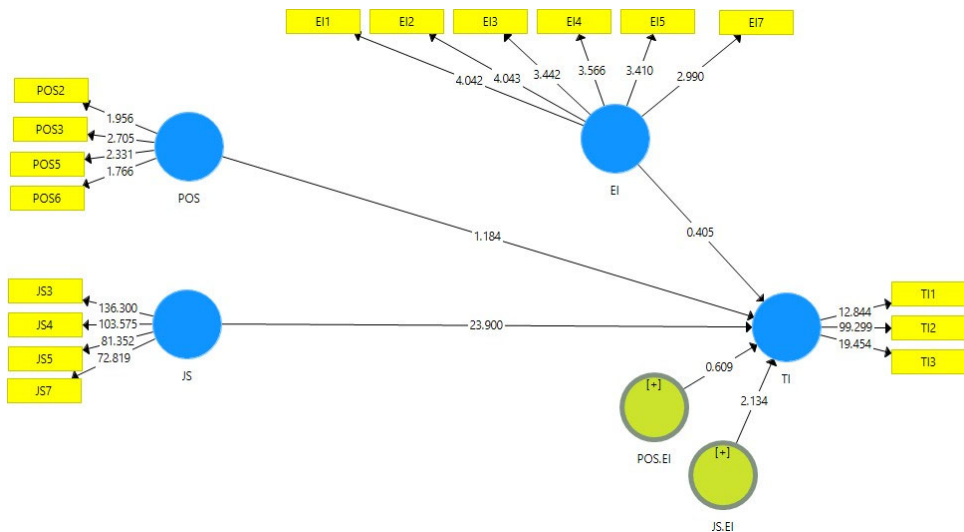
To complete the measurement model evaluation, discriminant validity must be estimated. It refers to the extent to which a construct significantly diverge from another set of constructs based on empirical standards. Taking recent research into consideration, the Fornell-Larcker criterion cannot effectively detect discriminant validity issues

(Henseler et al., 2015). Hence, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) was used to assess discriminant validity as against the Fornell-Larcker criterion. HTMT is defined by Hair et al. (2017) as the ratio of between-trait correlations to within-trait correlations. The HTMT values of all pairs of constructs in the matrix as shown in Table 4 are less than the maximum value of 0.90 placed for HTMT (Hair et al., 2017). Overall, it is possible to conclude that the required constructs validity of the current study has been established.

### 4.3 Structural model

Having evaluated the measurement model, the need to run the structural model-the second stage in the inferential analysis is pertinent. The essence is to establish the results of direct and moderating relationships between POS, job satisfaction, EI and TI.

**Figure 3** Structural model (see online version for colours)



**Table 6** Test of hypotheses

	Beta	STDEV	T Stat	P Values	Confidence intervals		Decision
					5%	95%	
<i>Direct path</i>							
POS → TI	-0.126	0.106	1.184	0.237	-0.208	1.187	NS
JS → TI	-0.754	0.032	23.900	0.000*	-0.810	-0.687	Supported
R <sup>2</sup> = 0.515							
<i>Moderating effect</i>							
POS*EI → TI	-0.148	0.041	3.609	0.027**	0.181	0.188	Supported
JS*EI → TI	-0.100	0.047	2.134	0.033**	-0.198	-0.006	Supported

Notes: JS = job satisfaction; POS = perceived organisational support;  
 EI = emotional intelligence; TI = turnover intention;  
 values are significant as \*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05.

As shown in Figure 2 and Table 6, the model’s  $R^2$  value is 0.515. It denotes that the exogenous latent variables (POS, job satisfaction, and EI) explain 51.5% of the variance in the endogenous latent variable (TI). Furthermore, the direct results (i.e.,  $\beta = -0.126$ ,  $t = 1.184$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) reveal that POS has an insignificant relationship with TI. As a result, the hypothesis stated earlier in this study that a relationship exists between POS and academic staff TI was empirically not supported. According to the results (i.e.,  $\beta = -0.754$ ,  $t = 23.900$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) in Table 6, job satisfaction has a significant relationship with academic staff TI. To further confirm the findings, the corresponding confidence intervals can be checked. The corresponding confidence intervals of the relationship do not include zero (i.e., either positive and positive or negative and negative values), it indicates that job satisfaction has a significant relationship with academic staff TI.

In terms of the moderation effect, the findings (i.e.,  $\beta = -0.148$ ,  $t = 3.609$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) show that EI significantly moderate the relationship POS and academic staff TI. More so, the corresponding confidence intervals of the relationship do not include zero. Hence, it further confirms the existence of moderating effect of EI on the relationship between POS and academic staff TI. In addition, EI significantly moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and academic staff TI based on the findings obtained in Table 6 (i.e.,  $\beta = -0.100$ ,  $t = 2.134$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the lack of a zero in the confidence interval confirms the moderating effect of EI on the relationship between job satisfaction and TI.

**Table 7** Effect size of exogenous variables on endogenous variables

<i>Construct</i>	<i>f<sup>2</sup>(TI)</i>	<i>Effect size</i>
POS	0.034	Small
JS	1.032	Large
POS	0.022	Small

Notes: JS = job satisfaction; POS = perceived organisational support; EI = emotional intelligence; TI = turnover intention.

According to the findings in Table 7, TI is explained by POS, job satisfaction, and EI, with effect sizes of 0.034, 1.032, and 0.022, respectively. According to Cohen (1988) threshold values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are commonly used to indicate small, medium, and large effect sizes ( $f^2$ ). In this case, POS and EI have a small effect size on TI, whereas job satisfaction has a large effect size.

**Table 8** Predictive relevance of exogenous variables

<i>Construct</i>	<i>SSO</i>	<i>SSE</i>	<i>Q<sup>2</sup> = 1-SSE/SSO</i>
Turnover intention	657.000	450.194	0.315

Note: SSO (sum of squared observations); SSE (sum of squared prediction errors).

Table 8 shows the blindfolding result of the reflective endogenous latent variable’s cross-validated redundancy ( $Q^2$ ). As illustrated in the table, the cross-validated redundancy ( $Q^2$ ) is greater than zero. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a predictive path in the model of this study (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2014; Hayes, 2009).

## **5 Discussion**

We hypothesised earlier in the current study that POS and job satisfaction would have significant negative relationships with academic staff TI, and that EI would moderate the relationships. Although the current study's findings found that POS has a negative relationship with academic staff TI, the relationship was not statistically significant enough to support our H<sub>1</sub> stating that POS has a significant negative relationship with academic staff TI. However, one of the probable reasons suggested by this study for the insignificant result could be due to the fact that an average lecturer in Nigeria sees teaching as a noble profession which come with so much responsibility and onerous task of building lives and nations. In spite of negative perceptions they may have with regards to organisational support such as justice, equitable rewards and compensation, and a good working environment, a number of them still prefer to keep their job (Paul and Hung, 2018; Salau et al., 2020). Another reason could be Nigeria's high rate of unemployment and lack of access to alternative job opportunities. Employees in Nigeria may find it difficult to quit their jobs even when faced with a lack of organisational support, knowing full well that there are no other job opportunities available to them. Similar to the findings of this study are the findings of Ahmad et al. (2014), Paille et al. (2010), Pajo et al. (2010), Wong and Wong (2017) who reported an insignificant negative relationship between POS and employee TI.

The second finding indicates that job satisfaction has a significant negative influence on academic staff TI. Thus, our H<sub>2</sub> which stated that job satisfaction has a significant negative relationship with academic staff TI was supported. According to this finding, higher levels of job satisfaction reduce academic staff's intention to leave and vice versa. This finding is supported by SET, which provides a general approach to the law of reciprocity in employee-employer working relationships (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). The law of reciprocity explains that individual feel obligated to help those who have helped them, and this is the core of social-exchange theory. By so doing, academic staff would minimise intention to quit when they feel satisfied with their job (Park and Cho, 2020). The current finding is in line with the findings of Alkhateri et al. (2018), Rahman and Syahrizal (2019), Park and Lee (2018), and Suryawan et al. (2021).

We also hypothesised that EI would act as a moderator in the relationship between POS and TI in our H<sub>3</sub>. The findings of our study support the assertion that the interaction of POS with EI will further strengthen POS and academic staff TI-relationship, resulting in a decrease in academic staff TI. The findings support the view of Da Camera et al. (2015) that people with high EI have positive perceptions and outlook about happenings in their workplace and adjust easily to situational factors. Such people are not always affected by perceptions of organisational outcomes. Hence, academic staff members with higher EI are likely to have positive perceptions about their organisation and consequently lower TI.

Finally, we proposed that EI moderates the influence of job satisfaction on academic staff TI. The findings of this study support our H<sub>4</sub>, indicating that the interaction of job satisfaction with EI strengthens the negative relationship between job satisfaction and TI, which is also consistent with the study's expectations. According to this finding, academic staff members with higher EI are likely to be more satisfied with their job and less likely to reduce their intention to leave than lower emotionally intelligent academic staff members.



### *5.1 Theoretical contribution*

This study's conceptual framework was built on earlier empirical findings and theoretical gaps found in the literature. It was also backed up and explained by three theoretical perspectives: OST (Eisenberger et al., 1986), SET (Blau, 1964), and EI theory (Mayer et al., 2004). According to OST and SET, when emotional and social needs of individuals are met, they tend to have incremental effects for both the organisation and the individual (Laschinger et al., 2006). This shows that employee perceptions of organisational support and job satisfaction reduce negative psychological employee attitudes and behaviours in the workplace. To better explain and comprehend the association between POS, job satisfaction, and TI, the current study included EI as a moderating variable. The EI model/theory of Mayer et al. (2004) proposes that EI is a cognitive ability which regulates and affects social-emotional needs of individuals. This suggests that EI may moderate or regulate the perception of academic staff with regards to POS and job satisfaction in workplace. This study thus fills the empirical and theoretical gaps found in the literature. As observed, there is lack of theoretical analysis and empirical tests with regards to EI in the developing nations (Bozionelos and Kiamou, 2008).

Although a number of previous empirical studies have highlighted the role of POS and job satisfaction in reducing negative employee attitudes such as the intention to quit, there has been little or no research into the moderating role of an individual's personality, such as EI particularly in the developing context. The main contribution of the study is the inclusion of EI in the model as a moderator in order to strengthen the relationships further. It is also worth noting that no previous research has looked into the role of EI in moderating the relationships between POS, job satisfaction, and employee negative attitudes, such as intention to leave. For the following reasons, this study included EI as a moderator in these relationships.

First, exigent control abilities such as EI may be able to overcome negative external factors toward TI (Riaz et al., 2018), because people with high levels of EI think positively and can tolerate unpleasant situations better than people with low levels of EI (Giao et al., 2020). Second, EI is expected to moderate the relationships between POS, job satisfaction, and TI because people with low EI are inconsiderate and find it difficult to internalise their negative feelings or behaviours (Chen and Wang, 2019; Da Camera et al., 2015). Overall, this study has added empirical evidence to the body of knowledge in the area of employee turnover, and the research findings could serve as a solid foundation for future studies on work attitudes and behaviours.

### *5.2 Practical contribution*

Based on the research findings, the current study has some practical implications in terms of human resource management practices in the context of Nigerian university practices. To begin, while the current study's findings indicate that POS is not a significant factor in academic staff TI, universities can make significant efforts to reduce academic staff turnover through their perceptions of organisational support. For example, university administration, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria, can implement organisational support policies and programs that reduce academic staff intention to quit, such as mentoring, good incentives, less workload, and other social emotional needs. More importantly, they should provide job satisfaction enhancers such as positive working conditions, fair compensation and rewards, recognition, and advancement

opportunities to reduce academic staff intention to quit and strengthen their loyalty to the university system. Finally, as stated earlier in the study, academic staff turnover presents a significant challenge for universities (Pienaar and Bester, 2008). As a result, the current study's findings suggest that, in addition to POS and job satisfaction, individual factors should be taken into account in the university selection process in Nigeria. Negative work attitudes of academic staff such as turnover could be reduced by the moderating role of EI. Thus, when making hiring decisions for academics, human resource managers particularly in the developing context, such as Nigeria may consider EI as part of selection criteria. This can be accomplished by administering a personality inventory test, the results of which can assist human resource managers in Nigerian universities in the selection process. Furthermore, EI training could be organised on an as-needed basis to help academic staff members better manage their own and others' emotions.

## **6 Conclusions**

Retaining competent, talented, and qualified academic staff is critical for universities seeking a competitive edge over their counterparts around the world. However, the issue of academic staff turnover has become a pressing concern for university administration particularly in the developing countries. Academic staff turnover comes with a huge cost. Universities, for example, may have to pay additional costs when an academic staff member leaves his or her job. These costs may include advertisement, recruitment, interviewing, selection, hiring, orientation, and training in the quest for getting new academic staff. As such, the current study investigated the moderating role of EI in explaining the relationships between POS, job satisfaction, and academic staff TI.

In specifics, job satisfaction was found to have significant negative relationship with academic staff TI. However, the relationship between POS and academic staff TI was found to be negative in this study, but not statistically significant. In terms of EI moderating role, it was discovered that EI moderates the impact of POS and job satisfaction on academic staff TI. The current study underscores the importance of job satisfaction in significantly reducing academic staff TI. In addition, it give emphasis to the importance of EI in enhancing POS, job satisfaction and academic staff TI-relationships in the Nigerian universities context. Therefore, it can be concluded that the negative relationships between POS, job satisfaction and academic staff TI were found to be stronger for academics who are high on EI.

### *6.1 The study's limitations and suggestions for future research*

Given that this study used a cross-sectional research approach, making casual inferences from the studied population may not be possible (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). As such, future studies may collect data using a longitudinal research approach. Furthermore, because the current study examined the moderating effect of EI on POS, job satisfaction, and TI-relationships, future studies may consider replicating similar research across cultures, economies, or sectors. Perhaps, such future studies may produce contradictory results or further validate the current study's findings. Finally, future research may investigate other individual or organisational personality's variables as moderators apart from EI.

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## Appendix

### Survey questionnaire

#### Section A: Respondent's personal profile

**INSTRUCTION:** This section provides information about you. Please, kindly tick as appropriate.

- 1 Age:  
a. Less than 30 { }      b. 30–40 { }      c. 41-50 { }      d. above 50
- 2 Gender:  
a. Male { }      b. Female { }
- 3 Marital status  
a. Married { }      b. Single { }
- 4 Designation/position  
a. Lecturer 1 { }      b. Senior Lecturer { }      c. Reader/Assoc. Prof. { }      d. Professor { }
- 5 Length of service:  
a. 0–10years { }      b. 11– 20years { }      c. 21–30years { }      d. above30years { }

*Section B: Research question*

Please, kindly tick as appropriate.

Key to options:

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Undecided
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly agree

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Turnover intention</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
1	I will probably look for a new job soon.					
2	I always think of quitting my job					
3	I am not thinking of quitting my job at present time					

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Perceived organisational support</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
1	The university strongly considers my goals and values					
2	Help is available from the university whenever I have a problem					
3	The university really cares about my well-being					
4	The university would forgive an honest mistake on my part					
5	The university is willing to help me when I need a special favour					
6	If given the opportunity, the university would take advantage of me					
7	The university shows very little concern for me					
8	The university cares about my opinions					

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Job satisfaction</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
1	I feel good about working in this university					
2	My job as a lecturer in this university is secured					
3	I am satisfied with my take home					
4	I believe the university is so concerned about me					
5	I receive recognition for a job well done					
6	I have good working relationship with my top management					
7	In overall, the work is good for my health					

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<i>S/N</i>	<i>Emotional intelligence</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
1	I have a good sense of why I have a certain feelings most of the time					
2	I am well-aware of my own emotions					
3	I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others					
4	I have a good understanding of the emotions of people around me					
5	I always tell myself I am a competent person					
6	I am motivated to do a task without needing pressure from others					
7	I am able to control my temper and handle difficulties wisely					
8	I can always calm down quickly when I am angry					

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