
Perceived job embeddedness in relation to work engagement in Tshwane Municipality public schools

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine whether job embeddedness predicts work engagement in the public schools' context. A cross-sectional quantitative survey approach was used, with a non-probability convenience sample of 278 teachers working in the Tshwane Municipality public schools.

The participants completed the measures on the Job Embeddedness Scale (JES) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17). A multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the effect of job embeddedness on these teachers' work engagement.

The findings indicate that job embeddedness significantly and positively predicts work engagement. The study contributes to the employee retention theory by suggesting that a work environment that encourages a higher level of embeddedness will foster work engagement and ultimately improve employee retention.

Key phrases

Employee retention; job embeddedness; public school teachers and work engagement

INTRODUCTION

The decision of employees to stay or leave the organisation for which they work, is a crucial aspect in work-related research across all sectors (Ferreira, Martinez, Lamelas & Rodrigues 2017:249). Many organisations are faced with the challenge of formulating and implementing employee retention strategies that will lead to the retention of employees who are considered critical in attaining organisational goals (Chiboiwa, Samuel & Chipunza 2010:2103; Das & Baruah 2013:8). Employee retention is important considering the high costs that an organisation incurs when employees leave (Farahani, Oskouie & Ghaffari 2016:1; Masibigiri & Nienaber 2011:2). Therefore, the inability to keep key employees is a costly proposition (Mahalakshmi & Rao 2012:18).

It is unquestionable that qualified and experienced teachers are possibly the most essential resource for providing high quality student learning and development (Tshabalala & Ncube 2014:149). Hence, the need to retain qualified and experienced teachers, particularly in specialised subjects, cannot be overemphasised. In spite of the many tactical initiatives by the Department of Basic Education to improve the retention of teachers, the department continues to struggle with significantly high teacher turnover rates (Mampane 2012:73).

Mampane (2012:73) further reported that South Africa is losing qualified and experienced teachers in subjects such as Science, Mathematics, Language and Technology. According to the Centre for Development and Enterprise (2015:6), there is a high level of attrition in the teaching sector as teachers constantly move in and out of the system. This research provides suggestions that human resources practitioners and leaders in the public education sector should consider when developing strategies to nurture engagement in the work environment to increase employee satisfaction and performance, and ultimately decrease turnover intention (Kim 2017:407).

When employees leave, their knowledge, skills and contacts leave with them, thus creating major skills deficiencies in the organisation (Kumar & Santhosh 2014:70). This study aims to add value to the literature on staff retention by concentrating on the relationship between job embeddedness and work engagement in the public education sector. The constructs of job embeddedness and work engagement have been found to be correlated in other contexts and serve to contribute to retention (Takawira, Coetzee & Schreuder 2014:1), but their relationship has not been examined in the public schools' environment in South Africa.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS CONTEXT

This research study was conducted in the context of employee retention in South African public schools, specifically focusing on Tshwane Municipality schools. Managing teacher retention is significant to ensure that quality teaching and learning occurs in schools (Mkhondo 2016). Quality education contributes significantly to the development of the South African economy (Redelinghuys 2016). Research shows that not only is our education system in a predicament due to a shortage of teachers, but a large number of expert teachers leave their profession to search for better offers on a yearly basis (Miya 2017). Countless numbers of brilliant, graduate teachers choose to change to other professions or countries (the Centre for Development and Enterprise 2015).

This high rate of teachers' turnover in schools shows there is a need for strategic human resource management interventions to assist in recruiting and retaining teachers (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd 2010). Mafora's (2013) study highlighted the fact that the principals of schools were lamenting the lack of policy and procedural guidelines from the Department of Basic Education to help them find ways in which to retain teachers who leave their jobs when their expertise is still essential. It is thus evident that the demand for teachers is high and that it is imperative to retain existing teachers in order to meet the demand in public schools. Currently there is no research in the public schools' context in South Africa that explains the manner in which job embeddedness influences work engagement of teachers.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Job embeddedness

Job embeddedness has evolved from the unfolding model of voluntary turnover proposed by Mitchell and Lee (2001:212) and it involves various influences that connect an individual to a specific job that provides him or her with a motive to remain in that job (Holtom, Smith, Lindsay & Burton 2014:398; Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh & Callan 2014:102). According to Mensele and Coetzee (2014:11) and Reitz (2014:160), the concept of job embeddedness tries to broaden the scope of factors that may clarify the reasons why employees remain in jobs by adding aspects that are non-affective (structural links to other people), and by also taking into consideration the off-the-job factors (fit in the community) as contributory aspects of employee retention. Bambacas and Kulik (2013:1934) maintain that job embeddedness focuses on the degree of networks that an individual encounters through his or her work

experiences, roles, relationships and responsibilities. When these interconnections become more multifaceted, an individual will become more embedded within the organisation and would be less likely to leave (Bambacas & Kulik 2013:1934). In their classical study, Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski and Erez (2001:1104-1105), described the three dimensions of job embeddedness as follows:

- links – refer to “formal or informal connections between a person and institutions or other people”;
- fit – refers to “an employee's perceived compatibility or comfort with an organisation and with his or her environment”; and
- sacrifice – refers to “the perceived cost of material or psychological benefits that may be forfeited by leaving a job”.

Job embeddedness is regarded as having a total of six dimensions, captured in a 3 × 2 matrix of links, fit, and sacrifice in each of two sets: on-the-job or off-the-job embeddedness (Coetzer, Redmond & Barrett 2014:3; Halvorsen, Treuren & Kulik 2015:1300). On-the-job embeddedness relates to how rooted an employee is within the organisation; whereas, off-the-job embeddedness is how rooted an employee is within the community in which he/she lives (Halvorsen *et al.* 2015:1299). A measure of overall job embeddedness is generated by aggregating the components of both on- and off-the-job embeddedness and the dimensions of fit, links and sacrifice (Halvorsen *et al.* 2015:1299; Lee, Burch & Mitchell 2014:201).

Initially, research on job embeddedness focused on identifying reasons why employees opt to stay with their organisations rather than why they leave (Ringl 2013:5). Recently, research on job embeddedness has been broadened to predict other work-related outcomes such as: organisational citizenship behaviours and innovation-related behaviours (Ringl 2013:5); turnover (Choi & Kim 2015:1216; Karatepe & Shahriari 2014:22; Marasi, Cox & Bennett 2016:142; Takawira *et al.* 2014:3); work engagement (Karatepe & Ngeche 2012:455; Takawira *et al.* 2014:7); and employee performance (Nafei 2015:227).

Holtom *et al.* (2014:405) found that on-the-job embeddedness is one of the best predictors of turnover intentions. The job embeddedness theory suggests that employees who have higher levels of embeddedness in the form of fit, links and sacrifice are the least likely to leave (Halvorsen *et al.* 2015:1307). Hence, most organisations have constantly attempted to find approaches to develop job embeddedness in their employees to increase retention and reduce the costs associated with recruitment, training and turnover (Marasi *et al.* 2016:143). Even though various scholars have explored the relationship between job embeddedness

and its outcomes, there is a lack of knowledge with regard to the processes through which it influences work-related outcomes (Tabak & Hendy 2016:22). This study tried to close the gap by investigating how job embeddedness correlates with and predicts work engagement in the workplace.

1.2 Work engagement

Work engagement has been a main topic among academics and practitioners since the origin of the term (Rai, Ghosh, Chauhan & Mehta 2017:87) and has been conceptualised from two different approaches (Choo 2017:391). The first approach was advanced by Maslach and Leiter and regards engagement as the direct opposite of burnout (Brauchli, Peeters, Van Steenbergen, Wehner & Hämmig 2017:52; Schaufeli & Bakker 2004:4; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker 2002:73). Conversely, the second perspective, developed by Schaufeli *et al.* (2002:73) and Schaufeli & Bakker (2004:4), postulates that work engagement is an autonomous construct that is not associated with burnout. However, both viewpoints define work engagement as a positive, work-related state of wellbeing or fulfilment (Masvaure, Ruggunan & Maharaj 2014:489).

Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind (Masvaure *et al.* 2014:489; Wang, Liu, Zou, Hao & Wu 2017:1) and has three components, namely, physical, emotional and cognitive components (Dehaloo & Schulze 2013:226). The three elements of work engagement are vigour, dedication and absorption (Field & Buitendach 2014:88). Work engagement is widely understood as an attitude or behaviour that is characterised by being attracted by, committed to, busy with, involved in, and retained in the work or organisation (Pandita & Singhal 2017:40). According to Junça-Silva, Caetano and Lopes (2017:591), there is a need to expand the research on work engagement and analyse it as a process due to its ability to enhance positive outcomes in the workplace.

Work engagement may possibly inspire employees to be more energetic about, dedicated to, and engrossed in their work, which could eventually result in positive organisational performance-related outcomes (Kim 2017:419). For example, work engagement was found to influence employee performance (Karatepe & Ngeche 2012:456), turnover intentions (Karatepe & Ngeche 2012:456; Mendes & Stander 2011:11; Takawira *et al.* 2014:7), and job commitment (Coetzee, Schreuder & Tladinyane 2014:5; Field & Buitendach 2014:88).

With empirical findings of a link between work engagement and wellbeing and performance, the rational reaction would be an in-depth analysis of the variables that encourage work

engagement as a leverage point for wellbeing and performance (Junça-Silva *et al.* 2017:592). A small number of studies have focused on work engagement of teachers (Field & Buitendach 2014:88). As noted by Dehaloo and Schulze (2013:226), research on the work engagement of teachers in South Africa is needed since literature has shown that there are some problematic factors that could influence their work engagement.

1.3 Job embeddedness and work engagement relationship

Empirical studies have shown that job embeddedness has a positive impact on work engagement in the workplace (Takawira *et al.* 2014:7). Job embeddedness and work engagement have a substantial influence on employee turnover, either partially or completely (Theresia, Irvianti & Sito 2015:847).

According to Jones (2015:76), highly embedded employees who are also engaged in their work will be less likely to show counterproductive work behaviours than an employee who is engaged but not embedded. Tabak and Hendy (2016:27) found that on-the-job embeddedness significantly influences work engagement through supervisory trust. This implies that when employees are certain that they have created connections at work, that their skills, knowledge, and values are in line with the culture of the organisation, and they perceive that they would sacrifice a lot if they left the organisation, they seemingly trust their leaders and vigorously engage in their work (Tabak & Hendy 2016:27).

2. GOALS OF THE STUDY

The dual aims of the study were

- to examine the relationship between job embeddedness (measured by the JES) and work engagement (measured by the UWES-17)
- to assess whether job embeddedness predicted work engagement of teachers in Tshwane Municipality public schools

The two research questions formulated for this study were:

(1) Is there a statistically significant and positive relationship between job embeddedness and work engagement?

(2) How does job embeddedness predict the work engagement of teachers in Tshwane Municipality public schools?

3. METHOD

3.1 Participants and setting

A cross-sectional quantitative survey approach was used (Mitonga-Monga, Flotman & Cilliers 2016:321), with a non-probability convenience sample of 708 teachers in Tshwane Municipality public schools. The data collection process was conducted between February and March 2017. A total of 303 questionnaires were returned giving an overall 43% response rate. A total of 25 questionnaires were excluded from the final analysis because they were either incomplete or multiple options had been selected. Therefore, the final sample consisted of 278 public school teachers.

3.2 Measuring instruments

Job embeddedness was measured using the JES (Mitchell *et al.* 2001:221). The JES is a self-rating instrument and consists of 37 items covering all three dimensions of the construct of job embeddedness, namely fit, links and sacrifice, for both the community and organisation. The JES makes use of a five-point Likert type scale and yes/no responses. The five-point Likert scale ratings were structured from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

Work engagement was measured using the UWES-17 (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004:48). The UWES-17 is a self-rating instrument with three different factors, namely absorption, dedication and vigour (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004:7; Vallières, McAuliffe, Hyland, Galligan & Ghee 2017:42).

3.2.1 Reliability

Mitchell and Lee (2001:222) found that the reliability for overall job embeddedness is 0.85. In the present study, the reliability for the JES was 0.91 (indicated by the Cronbach's alpha column in table 2). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004:15) found that the reliability of the UWES-17 was 0.93. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the UWES-17 was 0.95. The UWES-17 was deemed to be relevant for the purposes of this study because the three subscales of the instrument are internally consistent, constant over time and stable across samples from different countries (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004:41).

3.2.2 Validity

A literature review was conducted to find theories that are relevant to this research study. Classical and recent sources were used to investigate the two constructs of job embeddedness and work engagement. Validated measuring instruments that were applicable to the models and theories informing the study were used. The two research instruments have been used abundantly by scholars, professionals, students and practitioners, and were found to be valid.

3.3 Research procedure

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Department of Human Resource Management Research, the Ethics and Innovation Committee at the University of South Africa, and the Department of Basic Education (Gauteng Provincial Department of Education and Tshwane North District). The study was cross-sectional with the research data being collected in a set period of time (Naiemah, Aris, Sakdan, & Razli 2017). Hence, the research data was collected between February and March 2017. A survey approach was used with a non-probability convenience sample of 708 teachers in Tshwane Municipality public schools.

Each questionnaire was accompanied by an envelope and a covering letter stating the contact details of the researchers, the purpose of the study, and the ethical standards that it upholds. Confidentiality of the participants was ensured during the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting the data. A total of 303 completed questionnaires were received from the participants. Twenty-five questionnaires were disqualified from the statistical analysis because they were incomplete. Consequently, the sample size for this study is 278 public school teachers. The respondents were chosen purely on the basis of their convenience and availability (Creswell, 2014).

3.4 Statistical analysis

The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23. The correlations between job embeddedness and work engagement were calculated using the Pearson's product moment correlations. The correlations assist researchers to establish the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables of the study (Curtis, Comiskey & Dempsey 2016:20).

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether job embeddedness (independent variable) predicts work engagement (dependant variable). To determine the statistical significance and counter the probability of type 1 errors, the confidence interval

level was set at 95% ($p \leq 0.05$) and the practical effect size at $r \geq 0.30 \geq 0.50$ (medium to large effect) (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers 2015:244). Cohen's f^2 effect sizes were calculated to investigate the practical significance of the ΔR^2 values.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 1 below shows the biographical profile of the participants.

TABLE 1: Descriptive statistics for demographic information

Tenure	Percentage
0 – 1 year	10.1%
2 – 5 years	12.9%
6 – 10 years	15.5%
11 – 20 years	20.5%
21 + years	41.0%
Highest qualifications	Percentage
Standard 10/Grade 12 or equivalent	0.7%
Post school certificate or diploma	25.2%
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	39.2%
Honours degree or equivalent	32.0%
Master's degree or equivalent	2.2%
Doctoral degree or equivalent	0.0%
Other (specify): ACE	0.7%
Marital status	Percentage
Single	25.5%
Married	52.9%
Widower/Widow	8.3%

Divorced	10.1%
Living together	3.2%
Gender	Percentage
1. Male	27.0%
2. Female	73.0%
Age	Percentage
18 – 30 years	13.3%
31 – 40 years	14.0%
41 – 50 years	39.6%
51 – 60 years	29.9%
61 + years	3.2%
Ethnicity	Percentage
Black	96.0%
White	3.6%
Indian	0.0%
Coloured	0.4%

Source: Calculated from survey results

This table reveals that the participants comprised predominantly of married black females between the ages of 41 and 50, who have a bachelor's degree and had worked for the Department of Basic Education for 21 years or more. These were the main sample characteristics that had to be considered in the interpretation.

Table 2 below contains the means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha for the job embeddedness and work engagement variables.

TABLE 2: Descriptive statistics for job embeddedness and work engagement

	Mean	Standard deviations	Cronbach's alpha
Overall job embeddedness	3.33	0.56	0.91
Link-community	3.56	0.89	0.88
Link-organisation	3.87	0.73	0.93
Fit-community	1.63	0.45	0.32
Fit-organisation	1.81	0.74	0.61
Sacrifice-community	3.61	0.78	0.60
Sacrifice-organisation	3.40	0.79	0.91
Overall work engagement	3.87	0.72	0.95
Vigour	3.79	0.77	0.89
Dedication	4.03	0.81	0.90
Absorption	3.81	0.79	0.88

Source: Calculated from survey results.

The Cronbach's alpha results show that most of the factors were reliable (above 0.70), except for three variables, namely: link (for both community and organisation) and sacrifice-community, which were below the threshold of 0.70. The overall job embeddedness mean and standard deviation values were $M = 3.33$ and $SD = 0.56$. The links-organisation subscale obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.87$; $SD = 0.73$), followed by sacrifice-community ($M = 3.61$; $SD = 0.78$), links-community ($M = 3.56$; $SD = 0.89$), sacrifice-organisation ($M = 3.40$; $SD = 0.79$), fit-organisation ($M = 1.81$; $SD = 0.74$) and lastly, fit-community with the lowest mean score ($M = 1.63$; $SD = 0.45$).

This shows that the participants were moderately embedded in their work. The overall work engagement mean and standard deviation values were 3.79 and 0.72 respectively. Dedication obtained the highest mean score ($M = 4.03$; $SD = 0.81$) followed by absorption ($M = 3.81$; $SD = 0.79$), and lastly, vigour obtained the lowest score ($M = 3.79$; $SD = 0.77$). These results indicate that the participants were moderately engaged in their work.

4.2 Correlations analysis

TABLE 3a: Correlations between the job embeddedness and work engagement

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Overall job embeddedness	1						
2. Fit – community	0.71***	1					
3. Fit – organisation	0.84***	0.57***	1				
4. Links – community	0.15*	-0.08	-0.08	1			
5. Links – organisation	0.37**	0.13*	0.21*	0.25*	1		
6. Sacrifice – community	0.71***	0.58***	0.51***	0.05	0.14*	1	
7. Sacrifice – organisation	0.85***	0.46**	0.46**	0.06	0.12*	0.60***	1
8. Overall work engagement	0.66***	0.43**	0.43**	0.05	0.21*	0.51**	0.61***
9. Vigour	0.64**	0.37**	0.56**	0.05	0.18*	0.48**	0.63***
10. Dedication	0.61***	0.43**	0.57**	-0.04	0.20*	0.45**	0.55***
11. Absorption	0.54***	0.38**	0.44**	0.10*	0.19*	0.46**	0.47**

TABLE 3b: Correlations between the job embeddedness and work engagement

Variables	8	9	10	11
8. Overall work engagement	1			
9. Vigour	0.90***	1		
10. Dedication	0.92***	0.77***	1	
11. Absorption	0.90***	0.67***	0.76***	1

Notes: N = 278. *** ($p \leq 0.001$, large effect); ** ($p \leq 0.01$, medium effect); * ($p \leq 0.05$, small effect).

Source: Calculated from survey results.

Table 3a shows that overall job embeddedness correlated significantly with fit-community ($r = 0.71$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$), fit-organisation ($r = 0.84$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$), links-

organisation ($r = 0.37$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$), sacrifice-community ($r = 0.71$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$) and sacrifice-organisation ($r = 0.85$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$). A significant positive correlation was established between the overall job embeddedness and overall work engagement ($r = 0.66$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$).

Furthermore, table 3b shows that the overall work engagement correlated significantly with vigour ($r = 0.90$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$), dedication ($r = 0.92$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$) and absorption ($r = 0.90$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$).

4.3 Regression analysis

Tables 4a and 4b capture the results of the multiple regression analyses that were conducted to establish whether job embeddedness acted as a predictor of work engagement.

TABLE 4a: Standard regression analysis: job embeddedness as a predictor of work engagement

	Model 1 Overall work engagement			Model 2 Vigour		
	B	β	P-value	B	B	P-value
Constant	18.05			5.26		
Fit-community	0.11	0.04	0.51	-0.03	-0.03	0.58
Fit-organisation	0.47	0.26***	0.00	0.18	0.26***	0.00
Links-community	0.12	0.02	0.63	0.05	0.02	0.63
Links-organisation	0.34	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.06	0.19
Sacrifice-community	0.78	0.15*	0.02	0.23	0.12	0.06
Sacrifice-organisation	0.51	0.33***	0.00	0.24	0.41***	0.00
F (df; mean square)	(6,266) = 37.632***			(6,266) = 444.522***		
R	0.46			0.46		
Adjusted R ²	0.45+++			0.45+++		

TABLE 4b: Standard regression analysis: job embeddedness as a predictor of work engagement

	Model 3 Dedication			Model 4 Absorption		
	B	B	P-value	B	β	P-value
Constant	6.14			6.68		
Fit-community	0.07	0.07	0.24	0.08	0.07	0.29
Fit-organisation	0.18	0.30***	0.00	0.11	0.15*	0.04
Links-community	-0.08	-0.05	0.32	0.16	0.08	0.14
Links-organisation	0.13	0.09	0.07	0.11	0.07	0.19
Sacrifice-community	0.14	0.08	0.23	0.42	0.21*	0.04
Sacrifice-organisation	0.14	0.28***	0.00	0.13	0.21*	0.05
F (df; mean square)	(6,266) = 30.467***			(6,266) = 19.712***		
R	0.41			0.31		
Adjusted R ²	0.39+++			0.29+++		

N = 278; ***($p \leq 0.001$); **($p \leq 0.01$); *($p \leq 0.05$). β , standardised regression coefficient; B unstandardised regression coefficient; SE, standard error; f^2 , effect size estimate for the interaction term. $+R^2 \leq 0.12$ (small practical effect size). $++R^2 \geq 0.13 \leq 0.25$ (medium practical effect size), $+++R^2 \geq 0.26$ (large practical effect size).

Source: Calculated from survey results.

Table 4a and 4b show that four regression models were used: one model for work engagement and the other three for each of the components of work engagement. All four models were statistically significant ($F_p \leq 0.05$). The models accounted for 45% ($R^2 = 0.45$: overall work engagement); 45% ($R^2 = 0.45$: vigour); 39% ($R^2 = 0.39$: dedication); and 29% ($R^2 = 0.29$: absorption) of the variance in the work engagement variable.

In **Model 1** (overall work engagement), fit-organisation ($\beta = 0.26$; $p = 0.00$), sacrifice-community ($\beta = 0.15$; $p = 0.02$) and sacrifice-organisation ($\beta = 0.33$; $p = 0.00$) acted as significant positive predictors of work engagement, with sacrifice-organisation, fit-organisation and sacrifice-community contributing the most towards explaining the variance in work engagement variables.

In **Model 2** (vigour), fit-organisation ($\beta = 0.26$; $p = 0.00$) and sacrifice-organisation ($\beta = 0.41$; $p = 0.04$) acted as significant positive predictors of vigour, with sacrifice-organisation and fit-organisation contributing the most towards explaining the variance in vigour items.

In **Model 3** (dedication), fit-organisation ($\beta = 0.30$; $p = 0.00$) and sacrifice-organisation ($\beta = -0.28$; $p = 0.00$) acted as significant positive predictors of vigour, with fit-organisation and sacrifice-organisation contributing the most towards explaining the variance in dedication items.

In **Model 4** (absorption), fit-organisation ($\beta = 0.15$; $p = 0.04$), sacrifice-community ($\beta = 0.21$; $p = 0.00$) and sacrifice-organisation ($\beta = 0.21$; $p = 0.01$) acted as significant positive predictors of work engagement, with sacrifice-community, sacrifice-organisation and fit-organisation contributing the most towards explaining the variance in absorption items.

5. DISCUSSION

The correlation results reveal that the construct of job embeddedness and work engagement were significantly and positively related. These findings are consistent with those of Takawira *et al.* (2014:7) and Ringl (2013:35), who found that job embeddedness positively correlates with work engagement. This suggests that participants who are embedded in their community and organisation are more likely to be engaged in their work.

The positive correlations between job embeddedness and fit (community and organisation), links-organisation, and sacrifice (both community and organisation) show that employees who are embedded in their work also perceive themselves to be a fit with their community and organisation, have many links in the organisation and will sacrifice a lot if they were to leave their community or organisation. Job embeddedness also positively correlates with vigour, dedication and absorption. This means that employees who are embedded in their work are more likely to display high levels of concentration, enthusiasm, pride, energy and mental resilience while performing their daily duties. The positive correlations between work engagement and vigour, dedication and absorption show that engaged employees are more likely to be highly concentrated, enthusiastic, proud and inspired by their work.

The multiple regression results show that job embeddedness (fit-organisation, sacrifice-community and sacrifice-organisation) significantly and positively predicted work engagement. The results also suggest that fit-organisation and sacrifice-organisation is imperative in clarifying employees' level of vigour, dedication and absorption. The three sub-

dimensions of job embeddedness, namely, fit-community and links (both community and organisation), were found not to significantly predict work engagement and its sub-dimensions.

5.1 Practical implications

The main practical contribution of this study is its demonstration that job embeddedness correlates with and predicts work engagement. Organisations have a crucial role to play in nurturing employees' work engagement (Pandita & Singhal 2017:40). As stated by Ringl (2013:42), organisations in the quest for improved work engagement may consider strategies that increase employees' organisational embeddedness together with community embeddedness.

The findings confirm the need to consider job embeddedness in the public schools' context to understand the work engagement of teachers.

5.2 Limitations and future research

The study was limited to participants working in public schools around Tshwane Municipality. Convenience sampling was used; the results of this study cannot be generalised to the population and other occupational contexts because the sample did not cover all the characteristics of the population. Quantitative studies such as this need more participants considering the large number of public school teachers to be representative of the total workforce concerned. As the study was cross-sectional in nature, inferences could not be drawn regarding causation, because the correlations between the two constructs were interpreted rather than established.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the findings of this study provide new knowledge regarding the relationship between job embeddedness and work engagement as they apply to the public school context in Tshwane.

Future research should use a randomised sampling process with larger samples and should include different occupational fields, races, genders and ages.

5.3 Recommendations

The results of this study revealed that job embeddedness predicts work engagement. This means that organisations should strive to improve their employees' fit to both the community

and organisation because this may improve employees' level of vigour, dedication and absorption at work. Organisations may promote employees' fit to their jobs and the organisation by providing supervisory support (offering assistance, guidelines, trust in and praise for subordinates) and empowering them to build stronger links with their co-workers. Individuals who scores high on sacrifice for both the community and organisation also tend to score highly on vigour, dedication and absorption. Therefore, employers should implement strategies that make employees feel that that they would lose a lot if they were to resign from the organisation.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The two aims of the study were (1) to examine the relationship between job embeddedness (measured by the JES) and work engagement (measured by the UWES-17), and (2) to assess whether job embeddedness predicted work engagement of teachers in Tshwane Municipality public schools. These findings suggest that job embeddedness correlates and significantly influences work engagement of employees in the workplace. The study adds value to the employee retention theory by suggesting that a work environment that encourages a high level of job embeddedness will foster work engagement and ultimately improve employee retention.

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