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## **STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE, JOB EMBEDDEDNESS AND INTENT TO STAY: EVIDENCE FROM HEALTHCARE SECTOR**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Providing services to clients on a regular basis is a fundamental attribute of pharmaceutical personnel, particularly those in the hospitality department, nurses and resident doctors. Thus, sustaining a high-quality and stable healthcare services is vital for the healthcare sector. As for pharmaceutical companies' human resource management, how to effectively augment employee retention becomes imperative since it not only improve organizational performance but also lessens personnel costs. In this paper, we employed structural equation modeling to assess the nexus between job embedded-ness, organizational commitment and intent to stay with company. The paper utilized work-life balance as the moderating variable between organizational commitment and employee intent to stay. The research participants were pharmaceutical personnel who had worked with the Federal Medical Centres in Nigeria for at least 5years. Results revealed that job embedded-ness has significant and positive effect on organizational commitment and employee intent to stay with company. Moreover, organizational commitment mediates the link between job embedded-ness and employee intent to stay with company. Additionally, work-life balance moderates employees' intent to stay. In view of the findings, the study provides pharmaceutical companies with valuable management guidelines aimed at retaining employees.*

**KEYWORDS:** work-life balance; employee retention; job embedded-ness; intent to stay; organizational commitment

JEL Classification: M1, M12, M19

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Quite a number of studies have been done on work-life balance in both developed and developing nations; however, there are few studies on work-life balance, job embedded-ness and employee intent to stay in Nigeria. According to Sakthivel and Selvarani (2011), work-life balance plays a vital role in shaping the attitude of employees toward the organization, particularly for highly skilled workers like pharmaceutical personnel, where the nature of job is typified with high stress, insecurities in the healthcare work environment, competition and whose commitment present a challenge to employers. According to Agha, Azmi and Irfan (2017) with the increasing levels of stress, competition and insecurities in the healthcare work environment, work-life balance concerns have become tremendously important. In view of this, employees in the healthcare sector are looking for ways that will assist them strike a balance between work and their personal life. For today's healthcare sector, how to heighten organizational commitment and boost employee retention is a foremost task (Hsiao-Ping, Chi-Ming, Meei-Ying & Han-Shen, 2019; and Majumder, Giri & Gangopadhyay, 2019).

In management literature, there is no one universally accepted meaning of what makes up work-life balance. Work-life balance as noted by Karand Misra(2013) is about unearthing a well-fit balance between work and life, and feeling happy with both work and commitment of family. In essence, work-life balance is the equilibrium between three (3) mechanisms, which are personal time, paid and unpaid work. Thus, it usually refers to one of the following dynamics: organizational support for dependent care, flexible work options and family or personal leave. Compared with other service sectors, the healthcare sector has more intensive customer interaction. Researchers have identified that work-life balance leads to positive organizational commitment (Hsiao-Ping, *et al*, 2019; Agha, *et al*, 2017; Yucel, 2017; Suresh & Kodikal, 2017). Still, high employee turnover rate in healthcare sector can compromise healthcare services by making service quality erratic, plummeting healthcare profitability, and lessening customers' satisfaction.

In employee turnover researches, researchers have utilized variables of organizational commitment and work satisfaction to elucidate employees' intent to leave and found that employees' intent to leave decreases by stirring work satisfaction and organizational commitment (Marut & Wanno, 2014; Rashida, 2016; Oludayo, Falola, Ahaka & Fatogun, 2018; and Rubina, Tasmia, Rabiul & Ridoan, 2019). Nonetheless, these studies are futile in explaining why employees who are content with their jobs are still desirous of switching jobs. Thus by integrating the concept of job embedded-ness proposed by Lee, *et al* (2004), the nexus between job embedded-ness, organizational commitment and employee intent to stay can be better investigated. Consequent upon the above, this study assessed the nexus between job embedded-ness and organizational commitment as well as that between organizational commitment and employee intent to stay.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### ***Job Embedded-ness (JES)***

Job embedded-ness (JES) refers to integrative network systems where employees form indivisible bonds with people and other networks within the organization (Mitchell, *et al*, 2001). According to Cunningham, Fink and Sagas (2005) highly dense networks and sturdier bonds will make employees more unenthusiastic to switch jobs when they are offered a new one since they want to stay connected in the indivisible network of their organizations. Prior studies showed that employees with greater job embedded-ness are more enthusiastic to stay with their organizations (Cunningham, *et al*, 2005).

In human resource literature, there are three key variants of JES, which according to Mitchell *et al* (2001), encompassed organization fit, link and sacrifice. *First*, organization link refers to the extent of interaction and relatedness (formal or informal) between employees and organizations or other members of the workforce. Management literature indicates that sturdier links are equivalent to greater levels of job embedded-ness. Likewise, snowballing job embedded-ness reduces the chance of employees quitting their jobs. *Second*, organization fit refers to the level of correspondence or fit of employees' style of life with their work as well as residential area. *Third*, sacrifice is the values and benefits lost when employees leave the organization (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006); thus, it is the employees' opportunity costs for quitting or leaving the job.

***Organizational Commitment (ORC)***

Organizational commitment according to Hsiao-Ping *et al* (2019) is the psychological connections between employees and the organization. Langton and Robbins (2007) see ORC as a work attitude signaling the extent at which employees recognize themselves with the organization, organizational goals and extent to which they want to function effectively in the organization. Prior studies (Lee, 2004; Shreya & Rajib, 2014; and Suresh & Kodikal, 2017) have shown that reducing employees' work stress can result to improvement in organizational commitment, hence making employees to stay with their organization.

***Employee Intent to Stay (EIS)***

Employee intent to stay refers to the willingness and probability of an employee not switching job by adopting a more positive attitude (Yoshimura, 2013). Employees' intent to stay centers on not only retaining talented employees, but provoking the right positive work attitude among employees of the organization. Extant literature (Shreya & Rajib, 2014; and Suresh & Kodikal, 2017) suggests that there is a nexus between organizational commitment, job embedded-ness and employee intent to stay with the organization.

***Link between JES, ORC and EIS***

Extant literature suggests a link between JES, ORC and EIS. For instance, a study by Hsiao-Ping *et al* (2019) found that job embedded-ness has a significant and positive impact on organizational commitment and employee intent to stay while organizational commitment mediates the links between job embedded-ness and employee intent to stay. Robinson *et al* (2014) revealed that organizational sacrifice have significant effects on organizational commitment. Prior studies indicated that employees' organization fit has a positive effect on job embedded-ness, and the higher the organization fit, the more positive this effect becomes. Given the position of extant literature, we therefore hypothesized that:

***H<sub>1a</sub>: The higher the organization fit, the higher the organizational commitment***

***H<sub>1b</sub>: The higher the organizational link, the higher the organizational commitment***

***H<sub>1c</sub>: The higher the organizational sacrifice, the higher the organizational commitment***

Furthermore, other studies such as Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner (2000); and Perryer, Jordan, Firms and Travaglione (2010) found that organizational commitment is an precursor variable of employees' intent to stay and, moreover, organizational commitment is positively related with employee intent to stay. Consequently, the higher the employees' organizational commitment, the higher their intent to stay. In view of this, we therefore hypothesized that:

***H<sub>2</sub>: The higher the organizational commitment, the higher the employee intent to stay***

Extant literature has revealed that job embedded-ness has a high explanatory power for employee intent to stay, and that these two (job embedded-ness and intent to stay) are positively correlated (Mitchell, *et al*, 2001; and Perryer, 2010). Thus, the greater the levels of job embedded-ness is, the more employees are not willing to quit or switch their organization. In view of the above position, we therefore hypothesized that:

***H<sub>3a</sub>: The better the organization fit, the greater employee intent to stay***

***H<sub>3b</sub>: The greater the levels of organizational link, the greater employee intent to stay***

***H<sub>3c</sub>: The greater the organizational sacrifice, the greater employee intent to stay***

Similarly, Robinson *et al* (2014) found that organizational sacrifice and job embedded -ness have significant effects on organizational commitment and employee intent to leave. More importantly, when employees are able to fit well in the organization, they are resolute to stay and committed to the organization. This implies that job embedded-ness influence organizational commitment, and that the greater the organizational commitment, the greater employees intent to stay. In view of the above, we therefore hypothesized that:

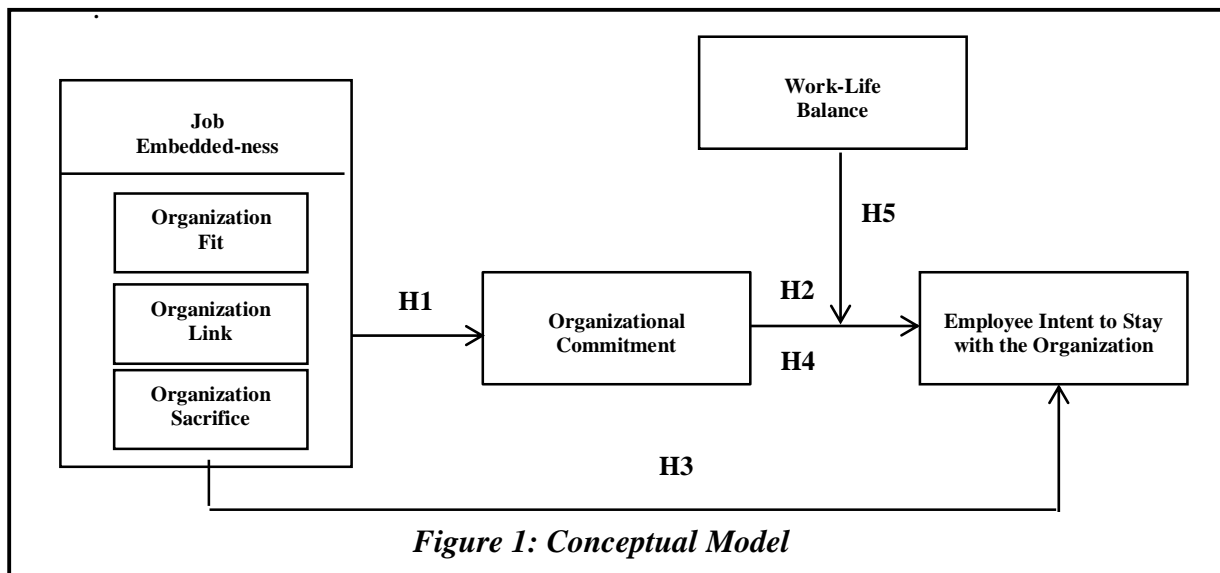
***H<sub>4a</sub>: Organization fit enhances employee intent to stay via organizational commitment******H<sub>4b</sub>: Organization link enhances employee intent to stay via organizational commitment******H<sub>4c</sub>: Organization sacrifice enhances employee intent to stay via organizational commitment*****Moderating Effect of Work-life Balance**

Prior studies showed that work-life balance is fundamental in attracting and retaining talented employees in the organization (Ojo, Salau&Falola, 2014; and Suifan, Abdallah&Diab, 2016). According to these studies, work-life balance is associated with organizational commitment and it affects employee intent to stay. In view of this, we hypothesized that:

***H<sub>5a</sub>: Work-life balance enhances the nexus between organizational commitment and employee intent to stay*****MATERIALS AND METHODS**

In this paper, convenience sampling was utilized to survey pharmaceutical personnel with at least 5 years of work experience in Federal Medical Centres (FMCs) in Nigeria. We distributed four hundred (400) questionnaires and three hundred and eight-six (386) were returned. However, after eliminating one hundred and twenty-one (121) invalid questionnaires, two hundred and sixty-five (265) valid questionnaires remained for a valid return rate of 68.7%. Among the pharmaceutical personnel in FMCs that completed the survey, 101 (38.1%) were men and 164 (61.9%) were women. Furthermore, most pharmaceutical personnel were from hospitality management (N=136), followed nurses (N=79) and resident doctors (N=50).

In view of the review of related literature, Figure 1 captures the research framework for assessing the link between job embedded-ness (organizations fit, link and sacrifice), organizational commitment, employee intent to stay and work-life balance of pharmaceutical personnel in Nigerian FMCs. Within this framework, the independent variables of the study encompassed organizations fit, sacrifice and link; dependent variable is employee intent to stay; moderator variable, work-life balance and mediator variable, organizational commitment



The questionnaire entails 10-item scale adapted from the works of Crossley, Bennett, Jex and Burnfield (2007); and Holtom and Inderrieden (2006). In these studies, the reliability results of Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for organization link, fit and sacrifice scales ranged from 0.85 to 0.89. On the other hand, the 6-item scale of organizational commitment was adapted from the works of Robinson *et al* (2014) and Mitchell, *et al* (2001) which yielded a Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.85. Moreover, the 5-item scale of employee intent to stay with the organization was adapted from the work of Coetzee and Stoltz (2015), with a Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.95 while 11-item scale of work-life balance was adapted from the work of Hayman (2005), yielding a Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.97. Noteworthy is the fact that all the Cronbach Alpha coefficients exceed 0.70, which according to Nunnally (1978) is reliable for a research instrument. Also, each questionnaire items were built on a 7-point Likert scale varying from 1(SD) to 7(SA). To ascertain the link between job embedded-ness (organization fit, link and sacrifice), organizational commitment, employee intent to stay and work-life balance, confirmatory factor as well as structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses were performed via STATA 13.0 statistical software.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Results

**Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation, Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Correlations of Variables**

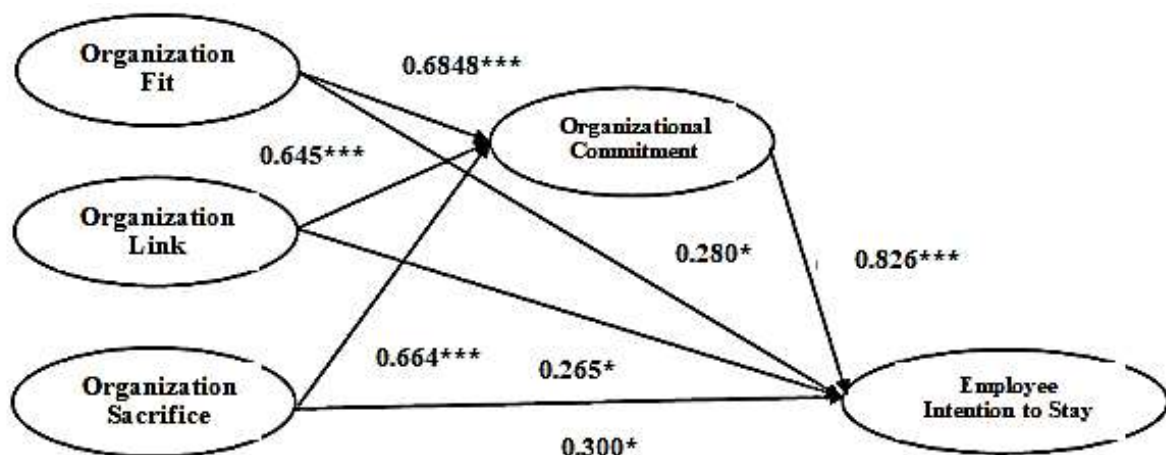
Variables	Mean	SD	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
Organization fit	5.3739	0.8484	0.96	0.58	<b>(0.935)</b>					
Organization link	5.9745	1.2726	0.73	0.45	0.272**	<b>(0.889)</b>				
Organization sacrifice	5.2773	1.0553	0.95	0.66	0.756**	0.272**	<b>(0.907)</b>			
Organizational comt.	5.7236	0.8978	0.98	0.75	0.487**	0.148**	0.487**	<b>(0.896)</b>		
Work-life balance	5.9756	0.8988	0.95	0.56	0.365**	0.404**	0.364**	0.438**	<b>(0.971)</b>	
Employee intent to stay	4.6820	1.6643	0.98	0.80	0.594**	0.237**	0.584**	0.741**	0.517**	<b>(0.951)</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2020;  $N=265$ ; \*\* $p<0.01$ ; Bold numbers in parentheses (diagonally) are reliability of variable

Presented in Table 1 is the descriptive result from our analysis, which encompassed mean, standard deviation, Cronbach alpha, composite reliability and correlation matrix. In line with our hypotheses, the correlations amongst organizations fit, link, sacrifice, organizational commitment, work-life balance and employee intent to stay with the organization were all significant. The CronbachAlpha ( $\alpha$ ) of each metrics was greater than 0.80, indicating a good reliability. The composite reliability of variables ranged from 0.73 to 0.98, indicating that the model had good internal consistency. Also, the average variance extracted for each factors was between 0.45 and 0.80, which is greater than the benchmark of 0.3 as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

### Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Results

We applied the structural equation modeling (SEM) to establish the path relationships among the investigated constructs. The results revealed that the measurement model offered an absolute fit to data ( $X^2/df = 3.96$ , goodness of fit statistic (GFI)=0.958, adjusted goodness of fit statistic (AGFI)= 0.963, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.966, root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.033, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.076). The GFI, AGFI and CFI exceeded the recommended ceiling of 0.90, and RMSEA and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) values were below the benchmark value of 0.08. This implies that the approach employed for modeling the investigated variables fits properly. Moreover, the research hypotheses results of the model data are presented in in Figure 2 and Table 2.



**Figure 1:** Results of the Hypothesized Model. \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

Given the SEM result, hypotheses  $H_{1a}$ - $H_{1c}$  were supported implying that organization fit, link and sacrifice of pharmaceutical personnel are significantly and positively related with organizational commitment. In terms of pathway coefficients,  $\gamma_{11}$  is 0.6848 ( $p < 0.001$ ),  $\gamma_{12} = 0.645$  ( $p < 0.001$ ) and  $\gamma_{13} = 0.664$  ( $p < 0.001$ ) respectively. These findings suggest that enhancing pharmaceutical personnel behaviours related to organization fit, link and sacrifice is vital for hospitality management, nurses and resident doctors to elicit organizational commitment in FMC. As for levels of reinforcement, organization fit is the greatest, accompanied by sacrifice and link. Besides, hypothesis  $H_2$  was supported; indicating that pharmaceutical personnel' commitment and intent to stay with FMC are significantly and positively related. Moreover, the

pathway coefficient  $\beta_{21}$  is 0.826 ( $p < 0.001$ ), showing that enhancing pharmaceutical personnel's commitment behavior will positively reinforce their intention to stay with FMC. Furthermore, hypotheses H<sub>3a</sub>-H<sub>3c</sub> were supported; indicating that pharmaceutical personnel's organization fit, link and sacrifice are significantly and positively related with their intention to stay with FMC. The pathway coefficient  $\gamma_{21}$  is 0.280 ( $p < 0.05$ ),  $\gamma_{22} = 0.265$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) and  $\gamma_{23} = 0.300$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that pharmaceutical personnel's should enhance organization fit, link and sacrifice behaviour in order to positively reinforce their intention to stay with FMC. As for levels of reinforcement, organization sacrifice is highest, accompanied by fit and then link. Additionally, results showed a significant and positive link between job embeddedness and employee intent to stay with FMC. Thus, this paper further assessed whether organizational commitment could alter the effect of job embeddedness on employee intent to stay.

**Table 2: The Model's Standardized Regression Weights, t-Values and Hypothesis**

Path	Standardized Regression Weight	t-Value	Hypothesis
<b>Direct Effect of the Integrative Model</b>			
Organizational fit → Organizational Commitment ( $\gamma_{11}$ )	0.685	6.073***	H <sub>1a</sub> *
Organizational link → Organizational Commitment ( $\gamma_{12}$ )	0.645	11.379***	H <sub>1b</sub> *
Organizational sacrifice → Organizational Commitment ( $\gamma_{13}$ )	0.664	9.870***	H <sub>1c</sub> *
Organizational Commitment → Employee Intent to Stay ( $\beta_{21}$ )	0.826	18.953***	H <sub>2</sub> *
Organizational fit → Employee Intent to Stay ( $\gamma_{21}$ )	0.280	2.108*	H <sub>3a</sub> *
Organizational link → Employee Intent to Stay ( $\gamma_{22}$ )	0.265	2.106*	H <sub>3b</sub> *
Organizational sacrifice → Employee Intent to Stay ( $\gamma_{23}$ )	0.300	2.679*	H <sub>3c</sub> *
<b>Mediating Effect of the Integrative Model</b>			
Organizational fit → Organizational Commitment → Intent to Stay ( $\gamma_{11} \times \beta_{21}$ )	0.512	-	H <sub>4a</sub> *
Organizational link → Organizational Commitment → Intent to Stay ( $\gamma_{12} \times \beta_{21}$ )	0.483	-	H <sub>4b</sub> *
Organizational sacrifice → Organizational Commitment → Intent to Stay ( $\gamma_{13} \times \beta_{21}$ )	0.497	-	H <sub>4c</sub> *
X <sup>2</sup> /df = 3.96, GFI = 0.958; AGFI = 0.963; CFI = 0.966; RMR = 0.033; RMSEA = 0.076			

Source: Fieldwork, 2020;  $t > 1.96$ , \* $p < 0.05$ ;  $t > 0.258$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ ;  $t > 3.29$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*indicates the hypothesis was supported

Table 2 shows that the direct effect of organization fit on employee intent to stay is 0.280; with organizational commitment, the indirect effect between organization fit and employee intent to stay ( $\gamma_{11} \times \beta_{21}$ ) became 0.512 ( $p < 0.001$ ). Owing to the fact that the indirect effect was greater than the direct effect, a mediating effect ensued, and hypothesis H<sub>4a</sub> was supported. Moreover, the direct effect between organization link and employee intent to stay with FMC is 0.265; with organizational commitment, indirect effect between the two ( $\gamma_{12} \times \beta_{21}$ ) became 0.483 ( $p < 0.001$ ). In view of the fact that the indirect effect was higher than direct effect, a mediating effect ensued; hence, hypothesis H<sub>4b</sub> was supported. Finally, the direct effect between organization sacrifice and employee intent to stay with FMC is 0.300; with organizational commitment, indirect effect between the two ( $\gamma_{13} \times \beta_{21}$ ) became 0.497 ( $p < 0.001$ ) while indirect effect was higher than direct effect, a mediating effect occurred; thus hypothesis H<sub>4c</sub> was supported.

**Validating the Mediating Effects****Table 3: Hierarchical Regression Results**

Variables	Employee Intent to Stay with FMC		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Step 1: Independent Variable</b>			
Organizational Commitment	0.826	0.269	0.144
<b>Step 2: Moderator Variable</b>			
Work-life Balance		0.662***	0.384***
<b>Step 3: Interaction Variable</b>			
Organizational Commitment x Work-life Balance			0.677***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.183	0.265	0.286
$\Delta R^2$		0.082	0.021
F	49.354***	39.297***	27.427***

Source: Fieldwork, 2020; \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

The interactive effect of organizational commitment, employee intent to stay and work-life balance with FMC, Nigeria was presented in Table 3. The hierarchical regression was utilized to assess the moderating effect of work-life balance on the nexus between organizational commitment and employee intent to stay with FMC. The regression model 3 revealed that the product of organizational commitment and work-life balance augmented the coefficient of determination  $R^2$  to 0.286, resulting in a variation ( $\Delta R^2$ ) of 0.021. Besides, the regression coefficient of organizational commitment x work-life balance increased the level of significance ( $\beta = 0.677$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that work-life balance has a moderating effect on the nexus between organizational commitment and employee intent to stay with FMC. This implies that when pharmaceutical personnel perceived work-life balance as good, the effect of organizational commitment and employee intent to stay with FMC is enhanced. Also, when work-life balance is perceived as bad, this augment the effect of organizational commitment and employee intent to stay with FMC. On the overall, work-life balance (when perceived as good by pharmaceutical personnel) could more accurately predict the effect of organizational commitment and employee intent to stay with FMC than when work-life balance is perceived as bad.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this paper, we investigated that organizational commitment has the utmost potent effect on employee intention to stay and hence a core task for Nigerian healthcare to improve pharmaceutical personnel's organizational commitment to augment their intent to stay. As a matter of fact, this paper has some insightful revelations. The paper offers pharmaceutical personnel with room for development and shows that pharmaceutical personnel care about whether their ideas are accepted by Federal Medical Centre (FMC) in Nigeria.

Consequently, the healthcare industry should assist healthcare personnel unbridle their talent and be aware of their desire for proficiency advancement. For healthcare personnel with better performance to their colleagues, the healthcare industry should allow them learn high-level work and ensure that their remuneration will be better if they stay with the organization. Besides, inspiring employees with suboptimal performance is vital to heighten their trust in the organization towards realizing their personal goals. As a matter of fact, healthcare personnel will be more keen to stay since they are aware that their needs can be better realized in their organizations. More importantly, the paper established that work-life balance had a moderating



effect on the nexus between organizational commitment and employee intent to stay. Hence, human resource department of pharmaceutical companies should assist employees in growing a good work-life balance. This will further help them stay on the job and be absolutely committed to put in their best in the work environment.

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