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# Turnover Intention in Nigerian Universities: Do Academics' Spirituality and the Spiritual Climate Matter?

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## Abstract

Spirituality research has attracted much interest in recent times, particularly among the management group of researchers, owing to the realisation that people come to work not with their hands and heads only but also with their spirit. The present study explores the intervening role of spiritual climate in the relationship between spirituality and turnover intentions among academics at tertiary institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted and 320 questionnaires out of the 500 administered were used. The data set collected was analysed using Smart-PLS to test the hypothesised relationships. The results reveal: (1) No relationship between spirituality and turnover intention; (2) Spirituality relates positively to and significantly with spiritual climate; (3) Spiritual climate significantly influences academics' intention to leave; (4) Spiritual climate is found to mediate the relationship between spirituality and intention to quit. We situate our contribution in this paper to theory and practice.

**Keywords:** turnover intention; spirituality; spiritual climate; academics; Nigeria

## Introduction

Spirituality in organisational literature has been burgeoning among researchers and practitioners in recent times as a critical domain of inquiry due to its overarching influence on human decision on job and life outcomes. This emphasis is due to its connection to people's intrinsic motivations, commitment to values and ideals that are embedded in their existential purpose, meanings, and values that are fundamental in knowing what it means to be "right" (Burton and Vu 2021; Vu 2021). According to Michaelson (2019) cited in Shin, Vu and Burton (2021), spirituality emphasises a "sense of inwardness rather than relying upon an objective super-naturalist account," suggesting that an individual has an inner life that is not mutually exclusive to his/her work and life's decisions, rather complementary in shaping moral worldview by providing an individual with a normative content for ascribing meaning to the work context (Burton and Vu 2020). As such, this study finds it a suitable predictor to explaining turnover intention among academics.

The turnover of academics in tertiary institutions has been worrisome on account of the challenges it poses to the future and the sustainability of a given educational system. Scholars and practitioners have made a case for people leaving one employment for another (Huffman, Casper and Payne 2014; Hom et al. 2012; Maertz and Boyar 2012; Maynard and Parfyonova 2013)—poor quality of work-life, pay, rigid and structured jobs with little autonomy, lack of fit, crawling career progression, and prospect and development, to mention but a few, have been linked to voluntary turnover of employees. However, it must be noted that the universal ease of movement of academics through adjunct, visiting, sabbatical and various linkage programmes has made it easy for them to be lured to other countries with better working environments and prospects for career development and advancement.

Academic turnover behaviour, like any profession, is a very costly phenomenon. Beside the negative impact on institutional reputation, relationships with clients/prospects and employees that remain (Wallace and Gaylor 2012), institutions' future recruiting success is also affected. In addition, institutions suffer a loss of their knowledge assets, (Harris, Lavelle, and McMahan 2018), which are costly to replicate and replace (Rubenstein, Eberly, Lee, and Mitchell 2018). Context-emergent turnover theory conceptualises turnover as the quantity and quality of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAO) depleted from a unit. Call, Nyberg, Ployhart, and Weekley (2015) posit that turnover leads to shrinks in yearly profit by 8.9%. This is even worse when we consider the unquantifiable impact on students and research activities when academics leave.

Research on voluntary turnover has been a source of major concern the world over. Evidence reveals that for the past one hundred years, a plethora of studies have been conducted with the aim of identifying the possible precursors to and consequences of the turnover intention (Hom, Lee, Shaw, and Hausknecht 2017). Recently, scholars are focusing inward on factors within employees that trigger turnover behaviour (Sok et al.

2018). Our study contributes to the ongoing debate in two ways. First, we evaluate the predictive role of individual spirituality as it relates to turnover intentions among academics in Nigerian tertiary institutions. We see spirituality from an individual level and hence define it as an individual's personal relationship or experience with transcendence or the divine that informs his/her existence and shapes their meaning, purpose and mission in daily life (Roof 2014). Spirituality in this sense is centred on academics' connections with greater beings and existential purpose but precludes religion (Karakas 2010), relational and shared values

Second, we respond to Milliman, Gatling, and Kim's (2018) call for more research on the mechanisms that enhance the relationship between spirituality and employee intention. We consider the role of organisational spiritual climate (Do 2018) as suggested (Milliman, Gatling, and Kim 2018). To the best of our knowledge, this is among the first studies to respond to this call, making it a novel contribution; this is consistent with Griffith (2006) who concludes that warm and supportive climates enhance positive behaviour of employees at the organisational level.

### **The Nigerian Context**

In recent times, Nigeria has witnessed a spontaneous increase in the number of accredited institutions of higher learning, particularly, universities. However, despite the proliferation of universities in Nigeria, none has featured in the top 1,000 universities in the world according to the 2019 Webometric ranking. Similarly, the 2019 report from Times Higher Education showed that no Nigerian federal university is listed in the top 600 universities in the world based on teaching (30%), research output (30%), citations (30%), global outlook (7.5%), and industry income (2.5%). Only five out of 43 Nigerian federal universities made it into the list of the top 50 universities in Africa. These are the University of Ibadan (ranked 17th), the University of Nigeria (25th), Obafemi Awolowo University (38th), the University of Lagos (41st), and Ahmadu Bello University (44th).

Documented evidence reveals that the rate of job resignation among academics in Nigeria is alarming (Gbenu, Kolawole, and Lawal 2014). Gadi and Kee (2020) cite the Nigeria Institute of Management that turnover rates in tertiary institutions ranges from 11% to 18.3%. As a result, the past few decades have been the most threatening period for universities in Nigeria in terms of the retention of academics. This situation was confirmed in a warning issued by the National University Commission and the Ministry of Higher Education supervisory agents that the shortage of qualified academics in Nigerian higher institutions will double if nothing is done to reduce the number of academics leaving (Gadi and Kee 2020). Ologunde, Akindele, and Akande (2013) traced the destinations of those that left to universities and centres of research in Europe, America and the Middle East. Academics that have stayed over the years have expressed discontentment with the infrastructure decay and poor conditions of service, as has been evident in the series of industrial unrest in recent times. In 2020, for example, while educational institutions in other parts of the world were assiduously working out ways

to cope with the scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nigerian academics embarked on one of the longest shut-downs in history due to industrial disharmony. Some of the reasons proffered were the failure of employers to review conditions of service, the progressive encroachment of the power and authority of the Governing Council, as well as internal day-to-day administration of universities through government directives (Ologunde, Akindele, and Akande 2013).

Though the Nigerian government attempted to respond to some of the challenges by establishing funding support agencies such as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund and the Petroleum Development Fund to provide the necessary infrastructure for teaching and learning, and to ensure training of academics both at home and overseas, turnover subsisted. While we admit that no system in the world is perfect, when an employee feels a sense of meaningfulness at work and his/her values align with those of the organisation, and also feels a sense of community despite the imperfections, s/he can find inner strength and fulfilment even amid challenges (Ashmos and Duchon 2000).

## Theoretical Background

The relationship between academics' spirituality, spiritual climate and turnover intention is considered in this study through the theoretical lens of person–organisational (P–O) fit. The theory posits that individuals' work attitudes and behaviours are influenced by how their personal goals and values align with those of their work environment (Edwards and Cable 2009; Lee, Sirgy, Efraty, and Siegel 2003). When P–O fit occurs, people and organisations are said to have certain shared fundamental characteristics in common. This is apparently seen in the areas of values (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson 2005) as it relates to existential purpose and goals which explains their intentions and actions. Literature has identified two types of fit characteristics, namely supplementary fit and complementary fit. A fit is said to be supplementary when the fundamental characteristics (i.e., values and goals) are shared by both the person and the organisation. However, when one party provides what is needed (values and goals) it is referred to as a complementary fit. This study hinges on the former in seeking to establish value and goal congruence in an employment relationship.

Linking P–O fit to spirituality and spiritual climate provides better understanding of how value is created and shared within the work environment. Academics' spirituality is linked to relationships or experiences with transcendence which shape their purpose in daily life (Roof 2014) and sense of meaningfulness (Ashmos and Duchon 2000) which emanates from a person realising his/her existential purpose (Del Rio and White 2014). Also, meaningfulness enables one to ascribe value to things that make sense to inner life and the external world (Temple and Gall 2016). We therefore situate P–O fit at the threshold of harmony between the inner self (individual spirituality) and the outer world (spiritual climate) (Pandey, Gupta, and Arora 2009) and the influence on work outcome (turnover intention). However, feelings of emptiness increase as meaning in

life, the future and the external world decreases (Weems et al. 2014 in Temple and Gall 2016), as such an academic may experience disharmony with the self, the environment and the transcendent. This might result in a negative job decision such turnover intention and eventual turnover.

## Conceptual Review and Hypotheses Development

### **Spirituality and Turnover Intention**

There has been a significant rise in spirituality research in the last decade owing to the realisation by modern organisations that people do not just work with their hands and brains (Mitroff 2003; Petchsawang and Duchon 2012) but that their souls, whose essence is the spirituality (Del Rio and White 2014), are involved. The subject has attracted diverse definitive and conceptual modification and meaning on the course of its development. Markow and Klenke (2005, in Do 2018) acknowledge that more than 70 definitions of spirituality exist. This is not unexpected in view of the complex and diverse nature of the term “spirituality,” hence the multifaceted and multi-conceptualised themes and dimensions, assessed at individual, work unit and organisational levels (Do 2018).

Individual spirituality (Underwood 2011) refers to aspects of personal life which include the transcendent, “more than” what we can see, touch or hear. According to Roof (2014, 587), “individual spirituality is the personal relationship or experience with transcendent which informs an individual’s existence and shapes their meaning, purpose, and mission in daily life. It does not need to encompass religion nor does it by nature exclude religion.” Studies reveal that spirituality improves our daily lives (Roof 2014), specifically work attitudes, including job involvement (Word 2012) and employee commitment (Jena and Pradhan 2018). These are found to essentially influence effectiveness and productivity of organisations and, as a result, decrease negative work outcomes (Cruz et al. 2018). Studies also link spirituality with turnover intention and intention to stay. In Shrestha and Jena (2021), Ghadi (2017), and Chawla and Guda (2010), spirituality at work is found to negatively relate to turnover intention, suggesting that expressions of spirituality address the deepest needs of humans, such that as the overall quality of life of an employee improves, it has a role in practical and desirable employee outcomes, which in this case, mitigates negative outcomes such as turnover intention. Milliman, Gatling, and Kim (2018) relate spirituality with the intention to stay in a job and service delivery as outcomes. The outcome shows a positive and significant relationship with intention to stay but not with service delivery. However, Vem, Mbasua and Davireng (2019) and Beehner and Blackwell (2016) have established that components of spirituality, such as the sanctification of work and spirituality programmes, respectively, did not significantly associate with turnover intention, casting doubt on earlier established results; hence, the need to further investigate this relationship using other samples.

Though there are various perspectives of spirituality, this study uses individual spirituality (Roof 2014), an aspect of Ashmos and Duchon (2000) that focuses on meaningfulness. We argue that an employee is not only interested in a challenging job but also a job that avails him/her the connection and nourishment of the inner life and desire (Ghadi 2017; Milliman, Gatling, and Kim 2018). In line with the conceptual meaning of spirituality and P–O fit theory (Edwards and Cable 2009; Lee, Sirgy, Efraty, and Siegel 2003), we expect spirituality to attenuate turnover intention among academics for the following reasons: perceived meaningfulness at work implies a discovery of one’s existential purpose in what s/he does—in this context, it involves teaching, research and commitment to community development. Such academics consider what they do as a calling to serve a higher purpose (transcendence) (Mahoney et al. 2005). Thus, they are expected to differ every challenge that seemingly obstructs this purpose. Since spirituality (Petchsawang and Duchon 2012) entails the search for meaning and deeper self-knowledge or transcendence, it serves as an inner source of energy which is expressed positively. Therefore, we hypothesise that:

H<sub>1</sub>: Spirituality negatively influences turnover intention among academics in Plateau State, Nigeria.

### **Organisational Spiritual Climate**

To provide an enabling environment for individuals to express their spiritual attributes, a climate must be created for it to thrive. The construct of workplace climate has attracted diverse interpretation and debate over the past decades. Verbeke, Volgering and Hessels (1998) posit that 32 different definitions of it exist in literature. Bowen and Ostroff (2004) situate it within two streams, namely: psychological climate and organisational climate. This study is in line with Cruz et al. (2018) and Pandey, Gupta, and Arora (2009) regarding the spiritual climate as an aspect of a workplace climate to mediate the relationship between individual spirituality and turnover intention in line with findings that suggested consistency (Shrestha and Jena 2021; Ghadi 2017; Chawla and Guda 2010), also in keeping with the fact that spirituality is rooted in the value framework of the organisation (Ashmos and Duchon 2000) and knowing that values are linked to organisational climate (Pandey, Gupta, and Arora 2009).

Spiritual climate, according to Pandey, Gupta, and Arora (2009, 318) is “The prevailing perception about the work and immediate work group that have spiritual content.” It entails general perception of the workplace by an employee that stimulates harmony with oneself through meaningful participation at work and with transcendence as well as having a sense of interconnectedness within the social and natural environment prevailing (Pandey et al., 2009). From the definition of spiritual climate by Pandey, Gupta, and Arora, three conceptual templates are apparent, namely: harmony with self (meaningful work, hopefulness, authenticity, sense of community); harmony with environment (respect for diversity, meditative work, Loksangrah, i.e., working for world’s maintenance); and relationship with transcendence (concern for the social and natural environment). From this conceptual definition, a promising relationship between

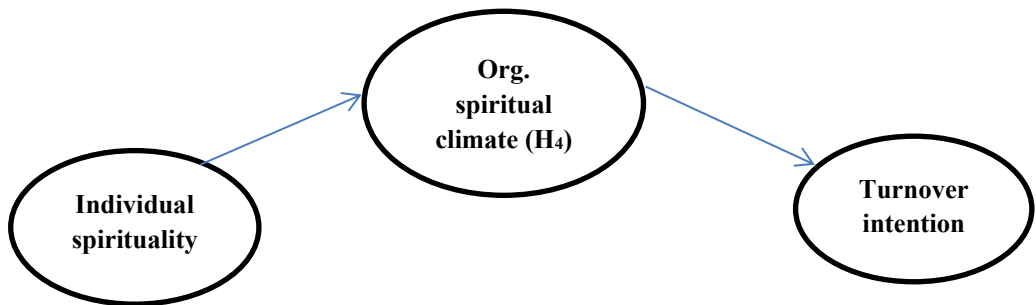
individual teachers' spirituality and spiritual climate is apparent. Roof (2014) notes that an individual's (academic's) personal relationship or experience with the divine influences their existence and shapes their perception of meaning, purpose, and mission in daily life. In this context, such experiences enable one to function in harmony with the environment (workplace), the self (meaning and existential purpose) and the transcendence.

Furthermore, academics who perceive the workplace positively and are in harmony with the environment, the self and the transcendence are unlikely to be deterred by challenges that confront them daily on the job. They are rather driven by their desire to impact on financial and human productivity, and other positive organisational outcomes (Quatro 2004), hence they will choose to remain and not quit. We therefore hypothesise that:

H<sub>2</sub>: Individual spirituality relates positively to perceived spiritual climate.

H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived spiritual climate negatively relates to turnover intention.

H<sub>4</sub>: Perceived spiritual climate mediates the relationship between spirituality and turnover intention.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework

## Method

### Participants

Participants in this study were drawn from the population of academics working in tertiary institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria. A self-response and self-administered questionnaire was used to obtain data. Though Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003) criticised this approach for its weaknesses with regard to common method bias, we adopted procedural approach (Chang, Van Witteloostuijn, and Eden 2010) by ensuring that across measures or similarities in item structure or wording did not mislead respondents (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, and Podsakoff 2012). Besides this, we muddled the items to avoid consistency motifs, idiosyncratic implicit theories, and



social desirability tendencies (Chang, Van Witteloostuijn, and Eden 2010; Podsakoff, Mackenzie, and Podsakoff 2012). Five hundred questionnaires were administered in anticipation of a 50% response rate; though the actual sample size obtained from the population of 3,000 using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) is 341. Out of the 500 questionnaires administered, 370 were retrieved and 320 were usable, indicating a 64% response rate.

## Measures

Turnover intention was measured using the 4-item scale used in Kelloway, Gottlieb and Barham (1999). Items included “I am thinking about leaving this organisation,” and “I am planning to look for a new job.” Each item was rated along a 5-point scale.

Individual spirituality was adapted from a daily spiritual experience scale which is a 16-item survey instrument designed by Underwood (2011) to measure individuals’ experiences of transcendence in their daily life. Samples of items included “I feel God’s presence in my career,” and “I find strength at work from my spirituality.” Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

For the organisational spiritual climate scale, six items were adapted from Cruz et al. (2018) and Pandey, Gupta, and Arora (2009). Items here included “My spiritual views are respected in this organisation,” “My spirituality has a comfortable home in my department,” “A diverse set of spiritual views are accepted among colleagues,” and “I am encouraged to express spirituality in this area.”

**Table 1:** Respondents’ characteristics

Indices	Number of respondents (N = 320)	Percentage of respondents
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	190	59
Female	130	41
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	290	91
Islam	25	8
Traditional	05	1
<b>Age</b>		
25–35	171	53
36–45	100	31
Above 46	45	14

Indices	Number of respondents (N = 320)	Percentage of respondents
<b>Qualification</b>		
PhD	125	39
Masters	170	53
1st Degree	25	8
<b>Years of work experience</b>		
1–5 years	39	12
6–10 years	95	30
11+ years	186	58

## Results

The characteristics of the respondents were: 59% male; 39% PhD holders, while others had either MSc or first degree; and 58% had worked in the current job for more than 11 years.

The analyses were conducted using Partial Least Squares (PLS) software 3.2.7, an approach to structural equation modelling (SEM) and are presented as thus. PLS-SEM is applied to exploratory research where “theory is less developed” (Hair et al. 2017, 15; Memon et al. 2017). Specifically, when the primary focus of the research is to predict and explain the key target constructs and/or identify the key driver constructs (Hair et al. 2017). Two broad evaluations are expected, namely the assessment of measurement model and the structural model.

### Measurement Model

In order to assess the measurement model, we evaluated the confirmatory factor analysis results which enabled us to determine the composite reliability (CR) and convergent validity through average variance extracted (AVE) (Hair et al. 2013). The CR and AVE values are presented in Table 2, and result shows that the factor loadings of at least 0.661 which is approximately equal or greater than the threshold of  $\geq 0.7$  by Nunally and Bernstein (1978) hence the criterion is not violated. Similarly, the constructs’ CR and the convergent validity coefficient (AVE) for the constructs are greater than the threshold of 0.7 and 0.5, respectively, (Hair et al. 2017) therefore the criteria are not violated.

**Table 2:** Assessment of Convergent Validity

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Individual spirituality	SP1	0.802	0.902	0.588
	SP10	0.788		
	SP11	0.790		
	SP12	0.715		
	SP13	0.724		
	SP14	0.821		
	SP2	0.815		
	SP3	0.671		
	SP4	0.661		
	SP5	0.793		
	SP6	0.750		
	SP7	0.797		
	SP8	0.809		
	SP9	0.776		
Org. spiritual climate	Sc1	0.871	0.926	0.782
	Sc2	0.899		
	Sc3	0.893		
	Sc4	0.885		
	Sc5	0.880		
	Sc6	0.880		
Turnover intention	TI1	0.823	0.876	0.638
	TI2	0.794		
	TI3	0.766		
	TI4	0.812		

Note: Criteria: Factor Loading/CR >0.70 (Nunally and Bernstein 1978; Fornell and Larcker 1981) AVE > 0.5 (Hair et al. 2011; Hair et al. 2014)

Discriminant validity was tested to establish that the constructs in the study are dissimilar to each other (Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2014) within the framework, using Heterotrait and Monotrait (HTMT) criterion (Henseler et al. 2014). The choice was informed based on Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015), who demonstrated the superiority of this method in a Monte Carlo simulation study. It was established that HTMT is able to achieve higher specificity and sensitivity rates (97% to 99%) compared to the cross-loadings criterion (0.00%) and Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion (20.82%), hence our preference for the approach in this study. Results in Table 3 indicate that discriminant validity was established among constructs since all values fall within the acceptable region of  $\leq 0.85$  (Franke and Sarstedt 2019).

**Table 3:** Assessment of discriminant validity, Hetrotrait and Monotrait criterion (HTMT)

		1	2	3
1	Individual spirituality			
2	Spiritual climate	0.764		
3	Turnover Intention	0.655	0.84	

Note: Criteria: HTMT inference ( $-1 < \text{HTMT} < 1$ )

### Evaluation of the Structural Model

In evaluating the structural model, a bootstrapping procedure using 5,000 resampling was conducted using Smart-PLS 3.2.7 in order to determine the path coefficient ( $\beta$ ), while other recommended analyses were used to determine the model fit,  $R^2$ , effect size,  $f^2$ , and the predictive relevance,  $Q^2$ , (Hair et al. 2014; Yeap, Ramayah, and Soto-Acosta 2016). Currently, Smart-PLS 3.2.7 reports standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) or root mean square residual covariance RMS theta (Henseler et al. 2014; Hair et al. 2017). The goodness of fit indices (SRMR, RMS theta) are fixed at a threshold value of 0.08 and 0.12, respectively. Meanwhile, the current model establishes an SRMR value of 0.065 which is  $< 0.08$ , and RMStheta value of 0.121 is  $< 0.12$ , affirming the model's fitness.

The summary of the structural model results is contained in Table 4. Salient findings are as follows: (1) the direct relationship that connects individual spirituality and turnover intention  $\beta = -0.088$ , t-value = 0.961 is insignificant. This suggests that the employee spirituality on intention to leave is not substantial enough. (2) The hypothesis that links spirituality with spiritual climate reveals a  $\beta = 0.729$ , t-value = 15.067 is strongly supported. This implies that increase in employee spirituality can enhance organisational spiritual climate. (3) The hypothesis connecting organisational spiritual climate and turnover intention revealed  $\beta = -0.672$ , t-value = 7.721, which was strongly supported. This implies that increase organisational spiritual climate reduces employees' intention to quit.

**Table 4:** Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std beta	Std error	t-value	p-value	VIF	f <sup>2</sup>		
H <sub>1</sub>	ISp -> TI	-0.088	0.092	0.961	0.168	2.134	0.008	0.318	Not Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	ISp -> OSc	0.729	0.048	15.067***	0.000			0.379	Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	OSc -> TI	-0.672	0.087	7.721***	0.000	1.000	0.466		Supported
R <sup>2</sup>	OSc=0.531, TI=0.546								
GoF	SRMR=0.065, RMS theta=0.121								

\*\*\*p<0.01, Where ISp=Individual spirituality, TI=Turnover intention, OSc=Organisational spiritual climate

Furthermore, other evaluations ( $R^2$ ,  $f^2$  and  $Q^2$ ) were done to ascertain the coefficient of determination and the substantive significance of the structural relationships. The results presented in Table 4 show the coefficient of determination  $R^2$  which measures the model's predictive power (Hair et al. 2017) of 0.531 and 0.564 as substantial based on Cohen's (1988) criterion. Similarly, the  $f^2$  (effect size) that explains the influence of a latent variable on the structural model was ascertained. The coefficients of 0.466 and 0.008 met Cohen's criterion for effect size of substantial and weak, respectively. In addition, we evaluated the predictive relevance  $Q^2$  of the indicators on the structural model, using a blindfolding procedure at a 7th omission distance. The result reveals a coefficient of 0.379 and 0.318 indicating high and moderate effect, respectively (Hair et al. 2017).

Additional analysis was conducted to evaluate the mediating role of organisational spiritual climate. To assess the mediating effect that exists between spirituality and turnover intention, PLS-SEM adopted the bootstrapping approach (Preacher and Hayes, 2004; 2008) to examine the significance of the direct path in the model. The indirect effect from Table 5 reveals  $\beta = -0.490$ , t-values of 7.484, which is strongly supported. This implies that organisational spiritual climate mediates the relationship between spirituality at work and turnover intention. In addition, Preacher and Hayes' (2008) second condition reveals LCI = -0.591, UCI = -0.374, that is zero did not straddle between the upper and lower class interval. This, therefore, means that the organisational spiritual climate strongly mediate the relationship.

**Table 5:** Assessment of mediation

Hypothesis	Indirect relationship	Std beta	Std error	t-value	LCI	UCI	Decision
H <sub>4</sub>	ISp -> OSc -> TI	-0.490	0.065	7.484	-0.591	-0.374	Supported

## Discussion

This study examined the predictive role of spirituality on employees' intentions to quit their jobs. In addition, we responded to the call made in Milliman, Gatling, and Kim (2018) for the future researchers to evaluate the mediating role of organisational climate as a mechanism of the relationship between the antecedent and the outcome of this study. Interestingly, a thorough search reveals that this study is among the first to empirically evaluate the role of organisational spiritual climate in the relationship between individual spirituality and the turnover intention of employees.

The hypothesis that predicts the direct relationship between individual spirituality and turnover intention of employees is not supported. The result suggests that an increase in academics' level of spirituality does not significantly reduce their intention to leave their jobs. The outcome agrees with an earlier study by Beehner and Blackwell (2016) where it was established that the effect of a workplace spirituality programme on turnover intention was not significant. However, it is not consistent with Ghadi (2017) and Chawla and Guda (2010) who posit that the expression of spirituality at work mitigates a negative outcome and thereby reduces turnover intention.

The result of the indirect relationship through the intervening role of organisational spiritual climate was strongly supported (Preacher and Hayes 2008; 2013), suggesting indirect-only mediation (Hair et al. 2017). As such, employee spirituality is found to influence the relationship with the spiritual climate obtainable within the organisation, which in turn influences employees' job decisions. The result also underscores the importance of P-O fit as well as a fit with the entire work team. Therefore, where an employee is in harmony with the self, the environment and the transcendent (Pandey, Gupta, and Arora 2009), s/he is bound to consider participation at work more interesting and meaningful, thereby reducing intention to quit. There is little empirical evidence (Cruz et al. 2018; Doram et al. 2017) on the relationship between spirituality and organisational spiritual climate; however, the relationship of spiritual climate and work outcome is well established. As it is linked with performance (Do 2018), customer experience (Pandey, Gupta, and Arora 2009) and students' satisfaction on campus (Rockenbach and Mayhew 2014), it also relates to students' worldview commitment (Mayhew and Bryant, 2013) as earlier noted. In view of the current study, which reveals the role of organisational spiritual climate between spirituality and turnover intention, the need to create an environment through spiritual climate to avoid the fear of offending others and the misconception that emanates (Cruz et al. 2018) when spirituality is mentioned.

## Implications of Findings

Theoretically, the link between individual spirituality and organisational spiritual climate validates the role of environmental support factor in the conceptualisation of spirituality. Milliman, Gatling, and Kim (2018) recommended that future research should introduce organisational climate issues into the conceptual relationship between spirituality and work outcome. By implication, Roof's (2014) individual spirituality model is found relevant in the sense that individuals who discover their existential purpose consider their work meaningful and sacred. This enables them to be in harmony with the spiritual climate within the organisation.

Findings of this study also explain the antecedent role of spirituality through P-O fit theory. It was established that employees' personal missions and purpose guide their work attitudes and behaviours in relation to their work environment (Edwards and Cable 2009; Lee, Sirgy, Efraty, and Siegel 2003). This buttresses the fact that turnover intention is strongly related to spirituality alignment within the organisational spiritual climate. Where these aligned, harmony is created among the self, the environment and the transcendent, hence a reduction in the intention to quit.

Practically, the findings are in line with, Guillén, Ferrero, and Hoffman (2015) who posit that employees do not participate at work with their brains and hands only. There is a place for the inner self linking with the work environment and this influences employees' work outcomes and the tendency to thrive at work. This calls for an emphasis on spirituality at work, where employees engage in a spiritual development programme. Karakas's (2010) observation is that a growing numbers of organisations, including large corporations such as Intel, Coca-Cola, Boeing and Sears, have incorporated spirituality in their workplaces, strategies, or cultures. They adopted spiritual practices such as holding Bible, Koran, or Torah study groups; forming voluntary prayer groups; interfaith dialogue groups; organising reflection and meditation exercises such as quiet time and yoga; as well as indoctrinating servant leadership development programmes, which give room for deeper reflection on the essence of existence in relation to transcendence.

In addition, Narayanasamy's (1999) model can be adopted for the teaching of spirituality at work with a focus on holistic education. Ali and Snowden (2019) advocate for the adoption of a holistic approach to education. They appeal for educators and mentors to possess the skills to engage with the spiritual domain in ensuring a holistic practice that will create the enabling consciousness about the spiritual issues surrounding careers during the learning and development process in order to mitigate induction and career crises on the job.

## Limitations and Direction for Future Research

This study responded to Milliman, Gatling, and Kim's (2018) request for future researchers to consider the mediating role of the spiritual climate in the relationship between spirituality and work outcome. The study focuses on spiritual climate which is narrow in scope compared to the organisational climate which encapsulates much more than the spiritual domain. Future researchers can focus on other factors such as ethics, justice, and supportive coworkers. This will further explain additional mechanism apart from the spiritual climate that strengthens the relationship.

The direct relationship is unexpectedly insignificant supporting the study of Beehner and Blackwell (2016), although theoretical evidence in previous studies (Ghadi 2017; Chawla and Guda 2010) shows otherwise. Therefore, when replicating this study in the future, researchers may investigate the boundary condition under which the relationship is consistent or inconsistent and can be addressed through the questions of "when" and "for whom" (Baron and Kenny 1986). Furthermore, this study in terms of scope was restricted to tertiary institutions in Plateau State only, and therefore does not reflect the entire population of academics in Nigeria. In view of this, the findings of this research cannot be generalised. Future research can replicate this study in more than one state, bearing in mind the heterogeneous nature of religious beliefs which shape spirituality (Fernando and Jackson 2006). In this context, the Christian religion is ingrained among respondents and thus has a way of tilting the outcome of this study, hence the need to include states where a preponderance of other religions such as Islam and traditional religion followers exist. In addition, this study took a cross-sectional design, in view of the drawback associated with this method; there is a need for a longitudinal approach to link intention with action.

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