Flexible Work Arrangements and Turnover Intention among Nigerian Academics: The Moderating Role of Perceived Ease of Technology Use

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Abstract

The growing use of digital technologies has changed the way academic work is organised, as lecturers can now teach, communicate, and complete other responsibilities across different locations outside conventional working hours. However, whether such flexibility makes them more willing to remain in their institutions is not always straightforward. This study examined the relationship between flexible work arrangements (FWAs) and turnover intention among academics in a Nigerian university and further examined whether ease of technology use influenced that relationship. Guided by the Technology Acceptance Model, the study adopted a survey design and collected data from 328 academic staff of Olabisi Onabanjo University between October 2025 and March 2026. The data were analysed using PLS structural equation modelling with SmartPLS 4.0.1. The results produced an interesting pattern. FWA had a positive and significant relationship with turnover intention ($\beta = 0.364$, $t = 3.135$, $p = .002$), contrary to the proposed negative relationship, and its contribution to the model was moderate ($f^2 = 0.166$). Ease of technology use did not significantly moderate the relationship between FWA and turnover intention ($\beta = 0.196$, $t = 1.294$, $p = .196$), and the interaction effect was small ($f^2 = 0.027$). The findings suggest that flexibility should not automatically be interpreted as a retention benefit, as having freedom over where or when work is performed may not necessarily eliminate factors that increase intention to quit. The study, therefore, concludes that the retention value of FWA may depend on how it is implemented and experienced.

Keywords: Flexible Work Arrangements; Employee Retention; Perceived Ease of Use; Technology Acceptance Model; Academic Workforce

Introduction

Academic work is becoming less tied to a particular place, as lecturers may teach on campus in the morning,

respond to students online in the afternoon, work on a research paper from home in the evening, and attend a departmental meeting virtually the following day. This shift has made workplace flexibility increasingly relevant to universities and their academic staff. Flexibility gives employees some room to decide when, where, or, in some cases, how they carry out their work. The attraction of workplace flexibility is partly explained by the control it gives employees over their working lives. Flexible arrangements can help employees balance work with family responsibilities and other personal demands, which, in turn, can affect their attachment to the organisation. Rhee et al. (2020), for instance, found that workplace flexibility was associated with lower turnover intention through reduced work–family conflict and greater job satisfaction. In higher educational institutions, especially universities, the retention question is a real dilemma. An accomplished scholar's departure is a loss to the university more than just a loss of one of its employees in a specific role. It can lose accumulated teaching experience, research knowledge, the ability to supervise postgraduates, contacts, and understanding of institutional procedures. Therefore, intention to turn over should be noticed before an actual turnover takes place. One potential answer seems to be workplace flexibility, and recent empirical evidence, including studies from Nigeria, supports the value of flexibility in academic work. Omena et al. (2026), studying 441 lecturers from six federal universities in South-East Nigeria, found that job flexibility was positively associated with work engagement and career success, with work engagement accounting for part of the relationship between flexibility and career success. This finding is useful, but it also leaves an important question unanswered.

Accordingly, technology is one such factor, as universities increasingly depend on digital platforms for teaching, assessment, research communication, meetings, access to information, and administration. An academic who finds an online platform simple to navigate can move between tasks with little disruption. Another academic may spend considerable time figuring out how a system works, correcting errors or seeking technical assistance. Both employees have been given flexibility, but the practical value of that flexibility differs; this is where ease of using technology becomes relevant, and research on technology use provides a useful starting point for understanding this possibility. Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model proposes perceived ease of use as a central factor shaping people's acceptance of information technology. In simple terms, people are more likely to respond favourably to a system when they believe that using it will not require excessive effort. The model has been widely applied in technology-related research, although subsequent reviews have pointed to the need for broader explanations of technology acceptance and use (Legris et al., 2003). The present study takes one element of this tradition, “ease of technology use”, and places it in a different conversation.

There is some evidence that this technological issue matters among Nigerian academics. Bamigbola and Adetimirin (2020) examined perceived ease of use of institutional repositories among 857 lecturers in Nigerian universities. Their findings showed that awareness and other user-related factors were associated with lecturers' perceptions of how easy the repositories were to use. This research demonstrates that perceived ease of use is relevant to the Nigerian academic environment. It does not, however, tell us what happens beyond technology adoption or use. In particular, it does not explain whether an academic's experience with technology can alter the relationship between a workplace arrangement and the intention to leave the university. Much of the existing research has concentrated on the pathways linking flexibility with employee outcomes. Rhee et al. (2020), for example, examined work–family conflict and job satisfaction as mechanisms through which flexibility relates to turnover intention. This line of research is valuable because it shows that the flexibility–turnover relationship is not necessarily straightforward. Yet the focus has mainly been on psychological and work–family processes. On the other hand, technology acceptance research has devoted considerable attention to perceived ease of use, but generally with adoption, acceptance, or continued use as the outcome (Davis, 1989; Legris et al., 2003).

The Nigerian literature, however, still leaves these issues largely disconnected. Research on university employees has examined organisational and psychological explanations of turnover intention, whereas studies

of lecturers' technology use have generally focused on the acceptance and use of digital systems. More recently, Nigerian research has begun to consider the consequences of workplace flexibility among university lecturers, but attention has focused on outcomes such as work engagement and career success rather than turnover intention (Omena et al., 2026). What remains less clear, therefore, is not simply whether academics have access to flexible work arrangements, but whether the technological conditions under which flexibility is experienced help to shape its relationship with the intention to leave. This distinction matters because contemporary flexible work is rarely technology-neutral. Perceived ease of use, a central construct in the Technology Acceptance Model, provides a useful way of explaining this difference. Davis (1989) conceptualised PEOU as the extent to which a person perceives that using a technology requires little effort. In the context of flexible academic work, this perception is relevant because technologies often serve as the means by which flexibility translates into everyday work practices. PEOU may therefore influence not simply whether technology is accepted, but the extent to which a flexible work arrangement is experienced as workable in practice. This provides the basis for expecting PEOU to moderate the relationship between flexible work arrangements (FWA) and turnover intention. The argument is not that technology use independently determines whether an academic leaves a university. Rather, PEOU may alter the conditions under which flexibility is associated with the intention to leave. In other words, the relationship between FWA and turnover intention may differ depending on whether academics perceive the technologies that support their flexible work as easy or difficult to use. This is consistent with the broader logic of TAM, in which perceived ease of use shapes individuals' responses to technology by influencing the effort required to use it (Davis, 1989). Extending that logic to flexible academic work suggests that the usefulness of flexibility cannot be considered entirely separately from the technological environment through which it is delivered.

Consequently, the gap in the existing literature has two dimensions. First, although workplace flexibility has attracted increasing attention among Nigerian academics, recent evidence has examined outcomes such as engagement and career success rather than whether flexibility is associated with an academic's intention to leave the university (Omena et al., 2026). Second, research on technology acceptance has not adequately established whether perceived ease of use of work-related technologies moderates the relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intention. The two bodies of literature, therefore, tell us something about flexibility and something about technology, but provide limited evidence about what happens when the two operate together in the academic workplace. Addressing this gap is particularly relevant as universities increasingly rely on digital platforms to support teaching, communication, collaboration and administration across flexible work settings. Against this background, the present study examines the relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intention among academics in Nigerian universities and investigates whether perceived ease of use moderates this relationship. Specifically, the study tests whether flexible work arrangements are significantly related to academics' intention to leave and whether the strength of this relationship varies according to academics' perceived ease of using the technologies that support their work.

Literature Review

Workplace Flexibility and Turnover Intention

The concept of workplace flexibility has received attention as a strategy for employee retention. Flexibility is applicable within the higher education sector where academics are involved in teaching, research, supervision, and administration at times outside normal working hours. Previous empirical research has largely shown that flexibility can be a negative determinant of turnover intention, but this effect is neither automatic nor consistent. Rhee et al. (2020), for instance, found that flexible working practices were associated with a decrease in turnover intention, mediated by work–family conflict and job satisfaction. Flexibility can be used as a tool to help academics balance their work and family lives, thereby enhancing their job satisfaction and commitment. However, a few studies warn of the costs of flexibility, as reflected in some quantitative findings. A large survey in Korea by Chung et al. (2013) showed an association between teleworking and flextime and increased job satisfaction, but also with increased working hours, which had mixed effects on intention to leave, depending on the individual. Kgarimetsa and Naidoo (2024) recently found that flexible

work arrangements were positively associated with South African Generation Z employees' intention to remain in their jobs. Overall, the literature is mixed: flexibility may facilitate retention if it helps reduce work–life conflict (Rhee et al., 2020); however, it may not have the same effect if it simply increases workload or is not supported by the organisation (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). A key insight from the above studies is that flexible work is experienced subjectively. Two employees with identical formal policies may react differently. Tsen et al. (2021) provide an example: in their multi-country study, they found that the design of one's job (specifically, how much independence one has) moderated the effect of flexibility on turnover intention.

Technology, Ease of Use, and Employee Outcomes

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a useful lens for understanding the technology-related conditions surrounding flexible work, but it does not, by itself, explain why employees intend to leave an organisation. Davis (1989) conceptualised perceived ease of use (PEOU) as the extent to which using a technology is perceived to require little effort and argued that usefulness and ease of use help explain technology acceptance and usage. Subsequent reviews confirm that TAM is primarily concerned with technology adoption and use, rather than broader employee outcomes such as turnover (Legris et al., 2003). Flexible work often depends on digital platforms for teaching, communication, meetings and administrative tasks. When these systems are easy to use, academics may be better able to convert flexibility into greater control over their work. When they are difficult to use, the same arrangement may create additional effort and frustration. For example, working from home may offer greater autonomy, but repeated difficulty accessing online systems can make that flexibility less beneficial. Technology-related demands may also contribute to stress and strain, providing a possible pathway towards withdrawal (Ranathunga & Rathnakara, 2022).

Usefulness goes hand in hand with the formation of attitudes towards technology. It is a result of decades of research that has confirmed understanding of the adoption and sustained use of specific technologies (Legris et al., 2003). Less studied is whether perceived ease of use affects other work outcomes, such as retention. For instance, Nasongkhla and Shieh (2023) examined the ease of use of a newly developed social media tool among university personnel and found it had a significant positive effect on behavioural intention to use the tool. This implies that the level of ease can impact engagement with a systems solution for work. According to the techno-stress literature, technology (complex systems and constant connectivity) can contribute to stress burnout and turnover (Ranathunga & Rathnakara, 2022). Across contexts, a common theme emerges that technology is actively shaping how people are influenced by flexible work. Thus, TAM supplies the technology-related boundary condition, while the broader flexible work arrangement–turnover relationship requires an organisational and work-design explanation. Perceived ease of use is consequently expected to moderate the relationship between FWA and turnover intention, rather than directly explaining turnover intention. The central question is whether academics experience flexibility differently depending on how easily they can use the technologies through which that flexibility is delivered.

Flexibility, Technology, and the Higher Education Context

The Nigerian university context adds a useful layer to the proposed model, as flexibility is shaped not only by organisational policy but also by the conditions under which academic work is delivered through technology. Academic work is knowledge-intensive and relatively self-directed, making flexibility potentially valuable for teaching, research and supervision. Yet, where digital infrastructure, user support or technological familiarity are uneven, the same flexibility may require greater effort to sustain. Bamigbola and Adetimirin (2020), for example, found that Nigerian academics perceived ease of using institutional repositories was influenced by awareness and user support, suggesting that perceived use reflects more than the technical design of a system. This implies that "ease of use" in Nigeria may hinge as much on training, familiarity, and resource constraints as on system design. At the same time, Nigerian studies on academic turnover have identified various antecedents (job satisfaction, contracts, support) but rarely mention technology. Much of the turnover-

flexibility literature is general or focused on the corporate sector, but academics have some unique features. Kanu et al. (2022) did find that a positive climate (management support and workplace "peace") reduced turnover intention among Nigerian academics, but their focus was on social rather than technological factors. Omena et al. (2026) found that job flexibility improved engagement and career success among Nigerian academics, but did not examine turnover or technology use. At the global level, other scholars have started to make a few references to this point. For example, Mohammad et al. (2025) have explored the impact of digital transformation on an organisation's turnover intention. They believe that when employees learn to use new, easy-to-use tools, they are more likely to use them, be satisfied with their work, and stay. Likewise, the Hu and Lan (2024) digital-HRM study demonstrates that ease of use can accentuate positive effects (in this instance, performance, but not specifically turnover). Generally, in the literature, flexible work arrangements may reduce academic turnover by easing work–life tension (Rhee et al., 2020), but could increase work intensity (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). Different institutions' experiences with digital tools may influence perceptions, shaping attitudes and engagement, ultimately affecting organisational outcomes (Davis, 1989; Hu & Lan, 2024). Based on this, two propositions are suggested from the literature: 1) Workplace flexibility is likely to be associated with turnover intention among academics, and 2) the ease of the use of technology may play as either a reinforcer or a detractor in the relationship between workplace flexibility and turnover intention among academics.

Hypothesis Development

Workplace Flexibility and Turnover Intention

There is generally a positive linkage between workplace flexibility and retention, but not a consistent one. Rhee et al. (2020) offer relevant evidence in this regard from an investigation of 250 low-wage workers in South Korea. They discovered that job flexibility was associated with reduced turnover intention, and that work–family conflict and job satisfaction mediated the relationship between workplace flexibility and turnover intention. The implication is that flexibility may deter employees from leaving because it facilitates the work/family balance. However, the study setting has a significant effect, and whether flexibility adversely affects staff retention is an empirical question. Flexibility can enhance the work experience but can also impose additional demands in an environment where the lines between work and personal life are permeable. Further, Tsen et al. (2021), who examined the relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intention using 16,920 observations from 35 nationally representative samples in the International Social Survey Programme. Their analysis showed that job independence influenced the relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intention. Employees with greater independence were more likely to experience favourable turnover outcomes from arrangements such as flexible working time, leave and working from home. The finding is significant because it shifts the question from whether flexibility is beneficial to the conditions under which it becomes beneficial.

This distinction is beginning to appear in research on Nigerian academics. Omena et al. (2026) examined 441 lecturers from six federal universities in South-East Nigeria and used a two-wave, time-lagged design to investigate job flexibility, work engagement and career success. They found that job flexibility was positively associated with both work engagement and career success, and that work engagement mediated the relationship between flexibility and career success. The study provides useful local evidence that flexibility matters to how Nigerian academics experience their work. It does not, however, address turnover intention, career success and the decision to remain with an employer are related but distinct outcomes. Taken together, these findings provide a reasonable basis for expecting that flexible work arrangements are associated with lower turnover intention, but they do not support an overly simplistic argument. Nigerian evidence confirms that flexibility has meaningful consequences for academics, but its connection with turnover intention remains insufficiently established. Based on the foregoing, this study proposes:

H1: Workplace flexibility is negatively related to turnover intention among academics in the selected Nigerian

university.

Moderating Role of Ease of Technology Use

The literature has shown that much of the flexibility that has come into academics' hands today is technology-dependent. Access to digital teaching platforms, electronic library resources, online meetings, student communication systems and institutional portals may be required for working away from campus. It is at this point that the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) come in handy. Davis (1989) identified perceived ease of use as one of the core beliefs influencing the acceptance of information technology. There is evidence that the perceived ease of using technology is already a relevant issue in Nigerian universities. Bamigbola and Adetimirin (2020) surveyed 857 lecturers to examine the determinants of perceived ease of using institutional repositories. Their findings showed that awareness, anchor factors and adjustment factors were associated with lecturers' perceptions of ease of use. This study is useful because it demonstrates that Nigerian academics do not experience institutional technologies uniformly. Their interaction with digital systems is shaped by knowledge, experience and other user-related conditions. What the study does not establish, however, is whether this variation in technological experience affects an employment relationship, such as the one between workplace flexibility and turnover intention. The missing link becomes clearer when flexible work is considered in everyday terms. This possibility suggests that ease of technology use is better understood as a boundary condition than simply another predictor of turnover intention. The evidence from Tsen et al. (2021) already shows that the consequences of flexible work depend on job characteristics. This is an extrapolation from the available evidence. If academic use of technologies supporting flexible work is easy, flexibility is more likely to be a resource for organising academic work and for retaining academics within their institution. In certain environments where technology is difficult to use, some of the benefits of flexibility can be lost. This argument gives rise to the second hypothesis:

H2: Ease of technology use strengthens the negative relationship between workplace flexibility and turnover intention among academics in the selected Nigerian university.

Figure 1: Research Framework

Methodology

Research Design and Study Context

This study adopted a survey design to analyse academic staff's perceptions of the level of flexibility they experienced and its relationship to their intent to quit their employment. A more specific option was explored in the study, namely the extent to which academic staff were able to access the technologies in which the flexible working was organised. The data was gathered from October 2025 to March 2026, among the academic staff. The survey approach was used in this study because most of the questions were based on perceptions and intentions.

Participants and sampling

The study was carried out among academic staff in Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State, Nigeria. The accessible population identified for the study consisted of 340 academic staff members of the university; despite being a small sample, the number of accessible staff members allowed the study to proceed. Three hundred and forty eligible staff members were invited to participate via a census approach. A total of 340 academic staff were invited to return the questionnaire, of whom 328 returned a usable one, giving a response rate of 96.5. The level of participation ensured that the sample covered a substantial proportion of the target population and minimised the impact of non-response on the observed relationships. Academic staff who provided informed consent were eligible. Non-academic staff were excluded because their employment and

workplace technology experiences fell outside the study's focus. The 328 respondents were predominantly male, with men accounting 67.4% of the respondents. 190 respondents were aged between 21 and 40 years, while 21.9% were aged 60 years and above. In addition, 90.2% held a PhD. Regarding academic rank, many academics are lecturers 1 (36.6%), and 16.2% and 8.5% are in professorial positions of Professor and Reader; 49 respondents (14.9%) are senior lecturers, and the rest are lecturers 11 and below. All the respondents are full-time academics in the sampled university. The demographic information was collected primarily to describe the respondent profile and to establish the context for examining the relationships among workplace flexibility, ease of technology use, and turnover intention. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional ethics committee before the study commenced (Approval No. OOU/SSMTHU/EC/0027/150925), and participation was voluntary.

Measures

A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Each substantive item was scored on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). This response format was used because it allowed respondents sufficient opportunity to differentiate among the various levels of agreement without making the questionnaire overly burdensome. Various items adapted from De-Menezes and Kelliher (2003) and Gasic and Berber (2023) were used to measure flexible work arrangements. The latter study was of special interest because it directly examined the impact of flexible work arrangements on turnover intentions among highly educated employees. The research also proved helpful in developing a measure of flexible working by separating it from the broader issue of employee outcomes. Items were modified as needed to reflect the situation of university academics while maintaining the meaning of the original measures. The ease of technology use was assessed using items from technology-use scales identified by Dwivedi et al. (2021) and Wu et al. (2023). The measures were chosen because the study focuses on the effort needed to use technologies that helped students with academic tasks when working flexibly. The language has been adapted to the university context and is not specific to a software package or platform. The intention to turnover was measured using items from Ahmad-Saufi et al. (2023) and Gasic and Berber (2023). The latter was a more pertinent basis, as turnover intention was one of the key constructs studied in their study on highly educated employees.

Data Analysis

The analytical model is centred on three variables. Flexible work arrangement was specified as the predictor, turnover intention as the primary outcome, and ease of technology use as the moderator. The data was analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4.0.1. PLS-SEM was selected because the study involved latent constructs measured through multiple indicators and, more importantly, included an interaction effect. The method was also suitable for a model that emphasised explaining and predicting relationships among constructs rather than testing only the overall model fit. Hair et al. (2022) and Hair and Alamer (2022) identified PLS-SEM as particularly useful when models involve several latent variables, prediction-oriented objectives, or interaction relationships. The analysis first assessed the measurement properties of the constructs before proceeding to the structural relationships. Statistical decisions were made at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = .05$), and sample adequacy was considered in relation to the requirements of the proposed PLS-SEM model before hypothesis testing.

Results

Measurement Model

Prior to testing the hypothetical relationship, the measurement model was examined. The assessment included indicator reliability, construct reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity. This sequence was required because the interpretation of the relationship between the latent constructs will depend on the quality of the measures used to represent them. Initially, 30 measurement items (indicators) were included across Flexible Work Arrangement, Ease of Technology Use and Turnover Intention. The assessment, however, retained only

19 items that met the study's minimum outer-loading criterion of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). The retained items were therefore considered sufficiently representative of their respective constructs for the subsequent structural analysis.

Figure 1: Measurement Model

Indicator Reliability and Collinearity

The retained indicators showed outer loadings ranging from 0.648 to 0.881 (See Figure 1 and Table 1). For flexible work arrangements, the retained items loaded between 0.648 and 0.807. The turnover intention indicators ranged from 0.700 to 0.864, while the ease of technology use items ranged from 0.672 to 0.881. Thus, although some retained items fell below the more conservative 0.700 benchmark often used in PLS SEM, all met the 0.60 criterion adopted for this study (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). The indicator VIF values ranged from 1.524 to 3.846 (See Table 1). Most of the indicators were therefore comfortably below conventional levels, although a small number of turnover Intention items approached the upper end of more conservative collinearity recommendations. None of the reported VIF values, however, reached the commonly used critical threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2022). This suggested a lack of excessive collinearity among the retained indicators.

Table 1: Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct

Item

Factor loading

VIF

CA

CR

AVE

Flexible Work Arrangement

FWA_1

0.718

1.687

0.868

0.881

0.515

FWA_14

0.795

2.084

FWA_15

0.669

1.924

FWA_16

0.659

1.877

FWA_2

0.688

1.901

FWA_3

0.807

2.854

FWA_4

0.74

2.572

FWA_5

0.648

2.09

Turnover Intention

TI_1

0.809

3.366

0.884

0.895

0.632

TI_2

0.846

3.138

TI_3

0.7

1.735

TI_4

0.75

2.646

TI_5

0.864

3.846

TI_6

0.79

2.121

Ease of Technology Use

EoTU_1

0.77

1.524

0.859

0.882

0.639

EoTU_2

0.672

1.579

EoTU_6

0.855

2.43

EoTU_7

0.802

2.016

EoTU_8

0.881

2.849

Note: VIF (Variance Inflated Factor); CA (Cronbach's Alpha); CR (Composite Reliability); AVE (Average Variance Extracted)

Construct Reliability

Construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Both statistics indicated satisfactory internal consistency across the three constructs (See Table 1). Flexible work arrangement recorded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.868 and a composite reliability of 0.881. Turnover intention produced values of 0.884 and 0.895, respectively, while ease of technology use recorded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.859 and composite reliability of 0.882. These values fell within the generally accepted range for internal consistency in PLS-SEM. More specifically, they exceeded the conventional minimum of 0.70 (Sarstedt et al., 2022), while remaining below levels that might suggest substantial item redundancy. The results, therefore, indicated that the retained indicators worked together consistently to represent workplace flexibility, ease of technology use,

and turnover intention.

Table 2: Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Construct

Heterotrait-Monotrait

Fornell-Larcker Criterion

EoTU

FWA

TI

EoTU

FWA

TI

Ease of Technology Use (EoTU)

-

-

-

0.799

-

-

Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA)

0.197

-

-

0.16

0.718

-

Turnover Intention (TI)

0.398

0.473

-

0.375

0.463

0.795

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE). The results showed AVE values of 0.515 for flexible work arrangement, 0.632 for turnover intention and 0.639 for ease of technology use. Each value exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2021; Fornell & Larcker, 1981), suggesting that the construct converged, and explained more that 50% of the variance. Discriminant validity was first assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). The reported HTMT values were 0.197 between ease of technology use and flexible work arrangement, 0.398 between ease of technology use and turnover intention, and 0.473 between flexible work arrangement and turnover intention (See Table 2). All three values were well below the commonly applied thresholds of 0.85 for conceptually distinct constructs and 0.90 for closely related constructs (Hair et al., 2021). The results, therefore, provided evidence that the three variables represented empirically distinct concepts rather than different labels for the same underlying phenomenon. The Fornell-Larcker criterion provided additional evidence of discriminant validity. The square roots of the AVE were 0.799 for ease of technology use, 0.718 for flexible work arrangement and 0.795 for turnover intention (See Table 2). These diagonal values exceeded the correlations between each construct and the other constructs in the model.

Structural Model

The structural model was then assessed to determine how flexible work arrangements were related to turnover intention and whether ease of technology use altered that relationship. The analysis considered the explanatory power of the model’s relative contribution of the predictors and the estimated path relationships.

Explanatory Power

The model explained 33.0% of the variance in turnover intention ($R^2 = 0.330$). This indicated that flexible work arrangements and their interaction with ease of technology use accounted for approximately one-third of the variation in academics' turnover intention (See Figure 2 and Table 3). The result suggested that the model captured a meaningful part of the factors associated with respondents' intentions to leave. At the same time, approximately two-thirds of the variance remained unexplained. This is unsurprising in an employment context where turnover intention may also be shaped by salary, promotion opportunities, workload, leadership, institutional conditions and personal career considerations. The R^2 value should therefore be understood as evidence of the model's explanatory contribution rather than a claim that the model fully explains why academics consider leaving their institution.

Structural Model and Test of Hypothesis

The effect size (f^2) analysis revealed the varying contributions of the two structural relationships. The f^2 value for flexible work arrangement was 0.166, and the interaction between ease of technology use and flexible work arrangement was 0.027 (See Figure 2 and Table 3). Based on the PLS-SEM guidelines, the medium effect is considered as an f^2 value of approximately 0.15 and the small effect as an f^2 value of approximately 0.02 (Hair et al., 2021; Cohen, 1998). Therefore, the contribution of workplace flexibility to explaining turnover intention was moderate, while the contribution of the interaction effect was small.

Hypothesis Testing

After evaluating the measurement and structural models, the hypotheses were tested. The direction, magnitude and statistical significance of the estimated structural relationships were the subjects of the analysis. PLS-SEM's hypothesis testing is based on the estimated path coefficients and their significance, which is usually determined by bootstrapping procedures (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2022). The first hypothesis (H1) stated that there is a negative relationship between workplace flexibility and intention to leave academic work (turnover intention). The second hypothesis (H2) tests whether ease of technology use altered the relationship between workplace flexibility and turnover intention.

Hypothesis One – Flexible Work Arrangement and Turnover Intention

The relationship between flexible work arrangement and turnover intention was statistically significant with a positive value ($p = .002$, $\beta = 0.364$, $t = 3.135$), implying that H1 was not supported (See Figure 2 and Table 3). Workplace flexibility was strongly associated with turnover intention, but the relationship was not in the hypothesised direction. Conversely, rather than a negative relationship between higher flexibility and lower intention to leave, the results revealed that those academics who reported higher levels of flexibility at work had higher turnover intention. Generally, flexible working is seen as a tool in the employment toolbox that should make work easier and, consequently, more likely to keep employees with their organisation. However, flexibility can manifest in various ways across organisational contexts, as it can offer autonomy without necessarily reducing work-related stress. The positive coefficient, however, does not indicate that academics became more inclined to leave their workplaces because of workplace flexibility. The finding thus undermines the assumption in H1 and indicates that the link between flexibility and retention may not be as simple as a negative hypothesis suggests. The effect size value provides additional insight in this context. The results of the flexible work arrangement yielded an f^2 value of 0.166, which predicted turnover intention. Compared with typical rules of thumb, this was a moderate contribution to the explained variance in turnover intention. However, even though the hypothesised direction of the relationship was reversed, flexible work arrangement was an important contributor to the structural model. The answer to the question of effect size is different from the question of statistical significance, and the f^2 result should therefore not be interpreted together with the bootstrapped t and p values (Benitez et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3: Hypothesis Result

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	T-statistics	P- values
H1	Flexible Work Arrangement -> Turnover Intention	0.364	3.135	0.002
H2	Ease of Technology Use x Flexible Work Arrangement -> Turnover Intention			

0.196

1.294

0.196

R^2

Turnover Intention

Value

0.330

0.166

0.027

f^2

Flexible Work Arrangement

Ease of Technology Use

Hypothesis Two - Moderating Role of Ease of Technology Use

The second hypothesis addressed whether ease of technology use altered the relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intention among academics at the sampled university. The interaction between ease of technology use and flexible work arrangement was positive but statistically non-significant ($\beta = 0.196$, $t = 1.294$, $p = .196$); consequently, H2 was not supported (See Figure 2 and Table 3). The absence of a significant interaction means that the data did not provide sufficient evidence that ease of technology use systematically changed the relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intention. This result warrants careful interpretation, as it does not necessarily mean that technology was unimportant to flexible academic work. Technologies may still shape how academics teach, communicate with students, attend meetings, submit administrative information or perform research-related tasks. It indicated that, within the present model, ease of technology use did not significantly serve as a boundary condition that altered the relationship between workplace flexibility and turnover intention. The relatively limited role of the interaction was also reflected in its f^2 value of 0.027. Using conventional benchmarks, this represented a small effect size. This suggests that adding the interaction between flexible work arrangement and ease of technology use made only a limited contribution to explaining differences in turnover intention.

The moderation mechanism was expected to operate by changing the strength of the relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intention, rather than by directly predicting turnover. At low perceived ease of technology use, FWA might have been expected to carry greater technological effort, for example, when an academic working remotely struggles with online teaching platforms or administrative

systems. At moderate ease of use, such technology-related difficulties would be expected to lessen, potentially weakening the FWA–turnover relationship. At high ease of use, flexibility could theoretically be experienced with less technological strain, thereby weakening its relationship with turnover intention, which is consistent with the effort-reduction logic of TAM (Davis, 1989). However, the non-significant interaction indicates that these differences across levels of technology ease were not sufficiently systematic in the present sample. This finding is consistent with the broader evidence that flexible work can operate through competing pathways, including greater job control but also work–family conflict (Haines et al., 2024), suggesting that technological ease alone may not be sufficient to determine how academics experience flexible work.

The two hypotheses tested did not support the originally proposed theoretical model. H1 was not supported because the statistically significant relationship between workplace flexibility and turnover intention was positive rather than negative. Similarly, H2 was also not supported because ease of technology use did not significantly moderate the relationship between flexible work arrangement and turnover intention. Ease of technology use, meanwhile, did not explain when or for whom this relationship became stronger or weaker. The implication is that the experience of flexibility within the university may have been shaped by institutional conditions rather than by technology alone.

Discussion of Findings

This study examines whether flexible work arrangements were related to intention to quit for academics and if the ease of use of technology would affect the relationship between these variables. The results led to a more complex profile than the theoretical prediction. The influence of flexible work arrangement was positively associated with turnover intention. Therefore, the first hypothesis was not supported. There was no significant moderation of the relationship between flexibility and turnover intention by ease of technology use, but the interaction effect was positive and small. Both findings raise a valuable research question for flexible working in universities.

The most notable result of the study is the positive association between flexible work arrangements and intention to leave. The outcome is surprising, given that more flexibility is thought to make employees less likely to quit, as reported in many studies. A meta-analysis of 68 studies revealed that flexible work practices were associated with lower turnover intention (Onken-Menke et al., 2018). In more recent research, Harrop et al. (2026), based on 113 studies with over 88,000 employees, also found a general negative correlation between flexible working arrangements and intention to quit. However, the current results indicate that this overall trend does not translate into all organisational and occupational situations. The present result is, however, not so extraordinary as it might seem, given the growing evidence. Tsen et al. (2022) suggested that flexible work arrangements could have contrasting effects, as they can promote autonomy while also presenting challenges regarding work boundaries and work-family conflict. Likewise, a recent study by Haines et al. (2024) showed that flexibility was negatively associated with turnover intention, mediated by job control and work engagement. These contrasting pathways are particularly helpful for interpreting the present result. Flexibility is not inherently a retention mechanism; its consequences depend on what flexibility changes in the employee's working life.

This positive association in this study might then indicate a difference between formal flexibility and substantive control of work. Employees can have some flexibility but have limited decision-making authority over workload, deadlines or institutional expectations. Similarly, in the study by Tsen et al. (2021), the link between flexible work opportunities and turnover intention was contingent on perceived job independence. Flexible work arrangement had a moderate effect size, again highlighting the relevance of this issue, suggesting that FWA did not contribute meaningfully to explaining the variation in turnover intention. The relationship was not just statistically identifiable, but statistically measurable. It also accounted for 33% of the variance in turnover intention, which is still a considerable amount. This aligns with the fact that, in most cases, academics do not decide on employment based on a single work arrangement. Academic career progression, salary, workload, leadership, research support and institutional climate factors can all impact when an academic starts thinking about leaving.

The second finding (H2) was that ease of technology use did not significantly moderate the relationship

between workplace flexibility and turnover intention. This result is theoretically interesting because the study drew on the Technology Acceptance Model. TAM proposes that perceived ease of use is a central factor in individuals' evaluations and acceptance of technology, partly because technologies requiring less effort are more likely to be viewed favourably and used effectively (Davis, 1989). From this perspective, it was reasonable to expect that academics who found the technologies supporting flexible work easier to use might experience flexibility differently from those who found those technologies difficult. The present evidence did not support that expectation. Ease of technology use neither significantly strengthened nor otherwise altered the relationship between flexible work arrangement and turnover intention. The interaction also produced only a small effect size ($f^2 = 0.027$). One explanation may be that ease of technology use is more relevant to technology acceptance and task performance than to broader decisions about whether to remain with an employer. An academic can find a learning management system straightforward to operate and still consider leaving because of workload, limited career opportunities or dissatisfaction with other aspects of institutional life. Conversely, an academic may find some technologies frustrating but remain committed to the university because other aspects of the employment relationship are positive.

This distinction points to a theoretical limitation in applying TAM directly to turnover intention. TAM was developed to explain why individuals accept or reject technology. Its central outcomes concern beliefs, attitudes and behavioural intentions relating to technology use. Turnover intention is different, and employment-related, shaped by multiple organisational and personal considerations. Ease of use may therefore be too proximal to the technology itself to operate consistently as a boundary condition for a more distal outcome, such as the intention to leave an organisation. The finding does not invalidate TAM in the present context; rather, it suggests that the theory may explain only part of the process through which technology-enabled flexibility influences employment outcomes. Ease of use may first affect technology acceptance, perceived usefulness or the quality of work performance. Those experiences may then influence work engagement, satisfaction, strain or organisational commitment, which are closer to turnover intention. A direct moderation model may therefore have overlooked intervening processes. This interpretation also fits the broader literature on flexibility, which increasingly shows that its outcomes depend on underlying mechanisms rather than on the mere presence of flexible arrangements.

Theoretical, Policy and Practical Implications

The findings make a modest but meaningful contribution to the theory of technology-enabled flexible work. First, they challenge the assumption that the benefits associated with flexible work arrangements are uniform. The positive relationship with turnover intention suggests that flexibility must be interpreted in relation to how it is embedded within the organisation. Furthermore, the non-significant moderating effect of ease of technology use suggests that the TAM should be better linked with other theories when the outcome of interest is turnover. Therefore, TAM-based beliefs about technology are insufficient to explain retention decisions. Theoretical models in the future might combine TAM with models that take into consideration job demands, organisational supports or job boundaries. This would attempt to acknowledge that an academic's experience of the flexible digital context is both technological and employment-related. Policies should therefore specify not only where and when work may be performed, but also reasonable expectations concerning availability, workload and digital communication. Practically, universities may need to audit the consequences of their flexibility arrangements. A useful review would ask whether flexibility reduces unnecessary constraints or merely allows existing demands to be performed across more locations and longer periods. Training in digital systems remains valuable, but the present findings suggest that improving ease of use alone is unlikely to resolve retention concerns.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate a question that has been gaining prominence in the academic world, as the nature of work changes. Is there a connection between flexible work arrangements and academics' decision to leave their university, and does this connection vary depending on the accessibility of the technologies they use to facilitate flexible work? The results did not yield the simple chain of relationships

common in the established literature. Although there was a significant positive relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intention, this relationship was not negative, as was generally believed. The ease of technology use, on the other hand, had no significant impact on that relationship. One of the most interesting findings is the positive relationship between flexibility and intention to turn over, which is especially notable. The absence of a moderating effect for ease of technology use also deserves attention. The Technology Acceptance Model has long identified perceived ease of use as central to how individuals respond to technology. Yet finding a digital platform easy to operate may be a rather different matter from deciding whether to remain with an employer. An academic can navigate a learning management system without difficulty and still be dissatisfied with workload, career progression or other institutional conditions. The present findings, therefore, suggest that ease of technology use may be more closely connected to technology acceptance than to the broader employment considerations that shape turnover intention. There are practical implications here. Universities operating in the post-pandemic environment should be cautious about presenting flexibility as a retention solution. A flexible work policy is unlikely to achieve much if it simply changes where work is completed while leaving workload, availability expectations and institutional pressures untouched.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The findings should be interpreted with several limitations in mind. First, the study used cross-sectional data. Consequently, the relationships identified cannot establish temporal order or causality. It remains possible that academics with stronger intentions to leave perceive or use flexibility differently. Longitudinal research would help clarify whether changes in flexible work arrangements precede changes in turnover intention. Second, the study was conducted at a single university. This provided a valuable institutional focus but necessarily limits the extent to which the findings can be generalised to all Nigerian universities. Institutional conditions, technological infrastructure and flexibility policies may differ considerably across public and private institutions. Multi-university research, ideally incorporating different ownership structures and geographical regions, would therefore provide a stronger test of the relationships identified here. Finally, the measures were based on respondents' self-reports. Although appropriate for examining perceptions and intentions, common method effects may have influenced the observed relationships. Future research could combine survey responses with administrative information, longitudinal measures or data collected at different time points.

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