

## The relationship between work burnout and job performance of vocational education lecturers in public universities in Nigeria

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<b>Keyword :</b>	<b>Abstract</b>		
Contextual performance; task performance; vocational education lecturers; work burnout dimensions;	This study investigated the relationship between work burnout (WB) parameters (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) and job performance (JP) components (e.g. task and contextual) of vocational education lecturers (VELs) in universities in Nigeria. The number of research subjects used in this study were 284 VELs from public universities in Nigeria. All subjects were used for the study without a sampling procedure because the size of the subjects was not large. The study employed structured psychological scale for data collection. Pearson correlational Metrix and linear regression with a bootstrap bias-correction technique were applied for the analyses of data. The results show that WB dimensions (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) do not significantly correlate with the JP components (e.g. task and contextual) of VELs. The results provided evidence concerning the relationship between WB dimensions and JP components of VELs. However, WB experienced by VELs has affected their JP. In all, caution must be exercised by university administrators in assigning job responsibilities to lecturers.		

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## INTRODUCTION

Vocational education lecturers (VELs) in the modern-day higher education institutions (HEIs) are saddled with the responsibility of equipping students with significant knowledge and skills required to confidently pursue entrepreneurial careers and advance further in professional disciplines (such as, business, home economics, agriculture, and industrial technology) or in related industrial fields. This means that the broad goal of vocational education programmes is to: (1) prepare students for employment in a variety of occupations and trades; (2) provide students with the essential knowledge and skills to create jobs; and (3) provide students with important knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurship (Edokpolor & Egbri, 2017; Edokpolor & Oduma, 2018). Therefore, the job activities performed by the VELs would further contribute to the achievement of goals

of vocational education programme and, in turn, promote the growth and development of Nigeria's economy in a sustainable manner.

The job activities performed by the VELs in HEIs (e.g. universities) involve the execution and control of various job descriptions. These various job descriptions would contribute to the achievement of goals of vocational education programme (Ile & Edokpolor, 2021, 2022). These various job descriptions represent two broad dimensions, e.g. task performance and context performance. Task performance is an action that is performed directly contribute to core technical activities, while contextual performance refers to behaviours that go beyond core technical activities that impact the culture and climate of the work environment (Bang & Reio, 2017; Motowidlo, Martin & Crook, 2013). The task performed by the VELs vary broadly and facilitate classroom teaching, research inquiry, course advising, teaching practice supervision, examination supervision, SIWES supervision, results computation and presentation, management and administration of resources and work as internal and external examiners (c.f. Chukwuedo & Igbiniedion, 2014; Chukwuemeke & Igbiniedion, 2021). Besides task performance, VELs perform other job descriptions, which are not written down in a document, but it is within the scope of context performance. Executing these contexts varies widely and includes the voluntary support of colleagues in completing work tasks, additional effort and time to complete assigned tasks, and disclosure of information about illegal activities to persons authorized to take action, voluntary support of colleagues to attend corporate functions of one kind or another, endorsing goals of HEIs, diffusing hostility and conflict among colleagues, and encouraging interpersonal trust among colleagues (Edokpolor, Chukwuemeke & Osifo, 2022; Ile & Edokpolor, 2021, 2022). It implies that the job descriptions, whether written or in-role and unwritten or extra-role performed by VELs in HEIs can be seen as multi-dimensional in nature.

It can be observed from the above discussion that VELs perform complex and multiple job activities, which by implication they are prone to high work burnout (WB). This negative job situation (e.g. WB) experienced by the VELs seem to emerge from various job requirements for example, workload and conflict between work and family (Bang & Reio, 2017). WB refers to individuals' reactions to high levels of emotional demand work roles and a state of physical, mental, and emotional fatigue caused by persistently high levels of stress or strain at work. Johnson, Machowski, Holdsworth, Kern & Zapf (2017) defined WB as a situation where individuals are emotionally drained, detached themselves from work or other people or show negative attitudes toward work or other people; and where the way individuals feel at work diminishes. When VELs are

prone to WB, the first outcomes could be an increased job stress, feelings of disengagement, high level of professional inefficacy, and demoralized behaviour and are unable to turn off at the end of the day (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2005; Crawford, LePine & Rich, 2010; American Psychological Association, 2012).

WB is characterized by a three-dimensional syndrome that includes emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996; Vukmirovic, et al., 2020). Emotional fatigue is a situation where one feels fatigued; where one is emotionally drained; and where one possesses low energy and physical resources. Cynicism is a situation where one distances his/herself from colleagues and exert negative perceptions toward the job. Lack of professional accomplishment is a situation where one believe he cannot performing job descriptions effectively. Therefore, where VELs possesses low energy and physical resources, they may suffer decrements in their job performance (JP) components (i.e. task and context). The conceptual clarification of the three WB dimensional syndromes seem to explain the extent to which WB predict the JP of VELs in HEIs. However, existing literature has relatively shows that overall WB were negatively related to JP of employees (Bang & Reio, 2017; Chiaburu, Peng, Oh, Banks & Lomeli, 2013; Taris, 2006). Although, there is limited empirical studies that specifically shows the relationship between WB dimensions (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) and JP components (e.g. task and context) in relation to vocational education setting in the Nigeria context, where the VELs perform complex and multiple job descriptions within the academic session (Ogbuanya & Chukwuedo, 2017). Furthermore, most of the extant literature reviewed were not able to associate each of the WB dimensions to each of the JP components among VELs in public universities. The authors rely on this study to close this gap.

This study has contributed to the WB and JP literature in divers' ways. First, this study enriches the body of knowledge on WB and JP by providing insights and understanding into how WB dimensions (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) influences JP components (e.g. task and context) of VELs in public universities. Second, a conceptual model (see Figure 1) was developed to explain how the independent variables (i.e. WB dimensions) influences the dependent variables (i.e. JP components) of VELs in public universities. The following hypotheses were proposed by reviewing the existing literature.

1. There exist a significant relationship between WB dimensions (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) and task performance among VELs at public universities.

2. There exist a significant relationship between WB dimensions (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) and context performance among VELs at public universities.

## CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The authors developed a conceptual model (Figure 1) upon which the hypotheses were formulated. The conceptual model described how WB dimensions (i.e. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) influences JP components (i.e. task and context) of VELs. The conceptual model represents a model that explain a direct relationship between WB dimensions and JP components among the VELs. The underlying assumption is that whenever VELs experience high WB dimensions (i.e. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement), the JP of VELs will increase negatively. However, this underlying assumption have been supported by the Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) theory postulated by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001).

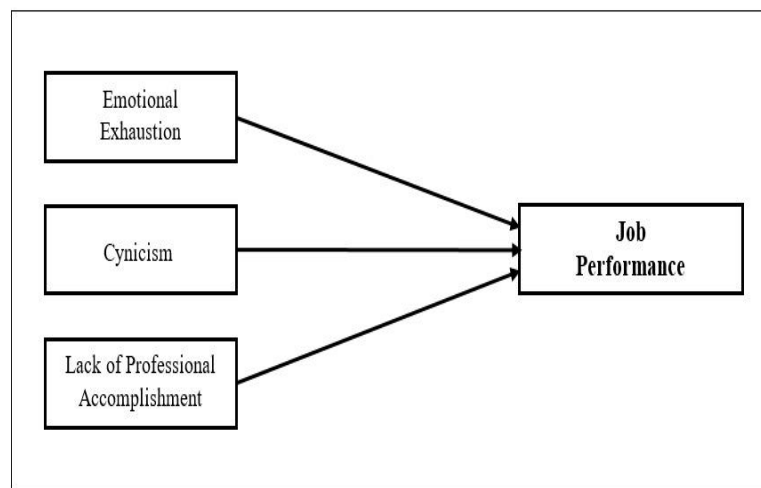


Figure 1: Hypothesized Framework of the Study.

## METHODS

The study design of the correlation study was adopted for the study. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009), a correlation study design is one that involves collecting data to determine whether and to what extent a relationship exists between two or more variables. A correlation study design is suitable for this study because the authors are able to investigate the relationship between each of the WB dimensions (i.e. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) and each of the JP components (i.e. task and context) among VELs in public universities. The extent to which the independent variables (i.e. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) influences the dependent variables (i.e. task and context performance) among VELs in

public universities is expressed as correlation coefficient ( $r$ ). The number of subjects were 284 from 12 universities in Nigeria. The subjects were considered appropriate for the study because they perform core technical job descriptions (in-role performance), which include teaching, course advising, researching, teaching practice supervision, examination supervision, SIWES supervision, result computation and presentation, and functioning as internal/external examiners, among others (c.f. Chukwuedo & Igbinedion, 2014; Chukwuemeke & Igbinedion, 2021). The subjects also perform other job activities (extra-role performance), although not written down, which include helping colleagues to accomplish their job tasks, sharing knowledge and ideas with colleagues, donating resources to the institution, cooperating with others, volunteering to attend cooperate meetings and functions. All the subjects were used for the study, hence the authors do not apply any sampling procedure. The demographic characteristics of the research subjects comprises of gender, age, job tenure, academic qualification and area of specialization (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the survey subjects.

Demographics	Categories	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	173	61
	Female	111	39
Age	Less than 26 years	52	18
	26 to 35 years	67	24
	36 to 45 years	63	22
	46 to 55 years	53	19
	56 to 65 years	28	10
	66 years and above	21	07
Job Tenure	less than 10 years	86	30
	10 to 20 years	93	33
	21 to 30 years	85	30
	31 years and above	20	07
Academic qualification	Bachelor's Degree	83	29
	Master's Degree	119	42
	Doctorate Degree	82	29
Area of Specialization	Agricultural education	46	16
	Home economics education	93	33
	Business education	116	41
	Industrial technology education	29	10

Adapted psychological scales were administered on the subjects by the authors through face to face administration, with the help of some research assistants who were briefed on how to administer and retrieve the research instruments. The adapted psychological scales were administered to the Heads of the Department (HODs) and VELs in public universities. Copies of the scale of each WB dimensions were administered on the VELs, since the scale measuring the construct is a self-report measure. Since the scale is an alternative scale, copies of the scale for each JP components were administered on the HODs to respond about the VELs. Codes were assigned to approximate responses to the questionnaire. These codes for specific psychological scales or measures of the VELs correspond to the codes filled with HODs for the VELs. Coding was done in close collaboration with the HODs using the department's staff list.

Note that each of the psychological scales used for data collection was rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale (1) never to (4) always. VELs WB were measured using the WB scale adapted from Maslach, et al., (1996), comprising three subscales, i.e. emotional fatigue (6 items - e.g. I feel emotionally drained from my work), cynicism (3 items – e.g. In my workplace, I treat some people as if they are impersonal object) and lack of professional achievement (4 items, e.g. In my workplace, I deal with emotional problems very calmly). VELs task performance were measured using the scale developed by the authors of the study, comprising 25 items, e.g. To what extent does ...use PowerPoint for face-to-face lectures. VELs context performance were measured using the context performance scale adapted from Goodman and Svyantek (1999), comprising 5 items, e.g. To what extent does ...voluntarily help colleagues perform job tasks. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of an item in the psychological scales and the coefficient alpha values can be found in Table 2.

Data were analyzed through quantitative statistics (e.g. bivariate correlation, linear regression and bias corrected (BC) bootstrap estimate) with the use of IBM statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 23.0). Bivariate correlation statistic were used to analyze the extent of correlation among all study variables. Linear regression statistic were used to test the hypotheses propositions. Bias-corrected bootstrap technique were used to test the significance of direct effects. The direct effects are significant when the confidence interval (CI) excludes zero.

The decision criteria for the use of bivariate correlation were based on a range of the coefficient (r) value recommended by Uzoagulu (2011) in the following order. The coefficient (r) value between  $\pm .8$  and  $\pm 1.0$  means very high correlation;  $\pm .6$  and  $\pm .8$  means high correlation;  $\pm .4$  and  $\pm .6$  means moderate correlation;  $\pm .2$  and  $\pm .4$  means low

correlation;  $\pm .0$  and  $\pm .2$  means very low correlation;  $\pm 1.0$  means perfect correlation; and the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) value of 0 means no correlation. Note that when a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) value reflect a negative value, it is a negative correlation; meaning that as one variable increases the other decreases. When a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) value reflect a positive value, it is a positive correlation; meaning that as one variable increases the other increases. For linear regression estimates, probability value less than or equal to .05 means significant (reject  $H_0$ ), while probability value greater than .05 means not significant (accept  $H_0$ ). For BC bootstrap, if the values of the confidence interval (CI) (lower limit - LL and upper limit - UL) fall within the same axis (i.e. not including zero value), it means significant (reject  $H_0$ ). If the values of the CI (LL and UL) are across axes (i.e. including zero value), which means not significant (accept  $H_0$ ).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Research Question 1: What is the extent of correlation between emotional fatigue and JP components (i.e. task and context) among VELs in public universities?

Research Question 2: What is the extent of correlation between cynicism and JP components (i.e. task and context) among VELs at public universities?

Research Question 3: What is the extent of correlation between lack of professional achievement and JP components (i.e. task and context) among VELs in public universities?

Research Question 4: What is the extent of correlation between overall WB (i.e. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) and overall JP (i.e. task and context) among VELs in public universities?

Table 2: Pearson's Correlational Metrix among the Study Variables.

S/N	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Emotional Fatigue	(.777)						
2.	Cynicism	.613**	(.824)					
3.	Lack of Professional Achievement	.499**	.789**	(.821)				
4.	Overall Work Burnout	.880**	.876**	.829**	(.886)			
5.	Task Performance	-.199**	-.420**	-.394**	-.358**	(.946)		
6.	Context Performance	-.040	-.122*	-.050	-.029	.409**	(.803)	
7.	Overall Job Performance	-.169**	-.401**	-.362**	-.325**	.980**	.581**	(.942)

Note. \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ ,  $N = 284$ , Cronbach's alpha values are in the prentices.

Table 2 shows that Cronbach's alpha values for the study variables are relatively high for emotional fatigue ( $\alpha = .777$ ), cynicism ( $\alpha = .824$ ), lack of professional achievement ( $\alpha = .821$ ), overall WB ( $\alpha = .886$ ), task performance ( $\alpha = .946$ ), context

performance ( $\alpha = .803$ ) and overall JP ( $\alpha = .942$ ) among VELs at public universities. The Cronbach's alpha values further indicates adequate measures of internal consistency. Table 2 also shows that emotional fatigue ( $r = -.199, p < 0.01$ ), cynicism ( $r = -.420, p < 0.01$ ), lack of professional achievement ( $r = -.394, p < 0.01$ ), and overall WB ( $r = -.358, p < 0.01$ ) were negatively correlated with task performance among VELs at public universities. Table 2 also shows that emotional fatigue ( $r = -.040, p < 0.01$ ), cynicism ( $r = -.122, p < 0.01$ ), lack of professional achievement ( $r = -.050, p < 0.01$ ) and overall WB ( $r = -.029, p < 0.01$ ) were negatively correlated with context performance among VELs at public universities. Furthermore, Table 2 shows that emotional fatigue ( $r = -.169, p < 0.01$ ), cynicism ( $r = -.401, p < 0.01$ ), lack of professional achievement ( $r = -.362, p < 0.01$ ), and overall WB ( $r = -.325, p < 0.01$ ) were negatively correlated with overall JP among VELs at public universities.

Research Hypothesis 1: There exist a significant relationship between WB dimensions (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) and task performance among VELs at public universities.

Table 3: Regression Estimates of WB Dimensions Predicting Task Performance.

Task Performance									
WBD	$\beta$ (SE)	T	P	Bias	$R^2$	Adj $R^2$	P	BCa 95% CI	
								LL	UL
EF	-.199 (.194)	-3.409	.001	-.008	.040	.036	.000	-1.049	-.332
CY	-.420 (.356)	-7.772	.000	-.039	.176	.173	.000	-3.792	-1.860
LPA	-.394 (.286)	-7.200	.000	-.023	.155	.152	.000	-2.880	-1.334

WBD = Work Burnout Dimensions, EF = Emotional Fatigue ( $F = 11.619$ ), CY = cynicism ( $F = 60.403$ ) and LPA = lack of professional achievement ( $F = 51.837$ ), BCa = bias-corrected and accelerated estimates, CI = confidence interval.

Table 3 showed that emotional fatigue ( $F(1, 282) = 11.619, \beta = -.199, SE = .194, t = -3.409, p < 0.01, 95\% \text{ CI} = \text{LL } -1.049 - \text{UL } -.332$ ), cynicism ( $F(1, 282) = 60.403, \beta = -.420, SE = .356, t = -7.772, p < 0.01, 95\% \text{ CI} = \text{LL } -3.792 - \text{UL } -1.860$ ), and lack of professional achievement ( $F(1, 282) = 51.837, \beta = -.394, SE = .286, t = -7.200, p < 0.01, 95\% \text{ CI} = \text{LL } -2.880 - \text{UL } -1.334$ ) were negative predictors of task performance among VELs at public universities. The corresponding adjusted R-square (.036, .173, .152) also showed that 3.6%, 17.3% and 15.2% of the variations in task performance is impacted by emotional fatigue, cynicism and lack of professional achievement. Therefore, since these outcomes support our expectations, hypothesis 1 is supported in this study.

Research Hypothesis 2: There exist a significant relationship between WB dimensions (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) and context performance among VELs at public universities.



Table 4: Regression Estimates of WB Dimensions Predicting Context Performance.

Context Performance								
WBD	$\beta$ (SE)	P	Bias	$R^2$	Adj $R^2$	P	BCa 95% CI	
							LL	UL
EF	.040 (.048)	.667	.505	.000	.002	.456	-.057	.116
CY	-.122 (.095)	-2.071	.039	.000	.015	.080	-.415	.021
LPA	-.050 (.076)	-.835	.404	.000	.002	.482	-.241	.114

WBD = Work Burnout Dimensions, EF = Emotional Fatigue ( $F = .445$ ), CY = cynicism ( $F = 4.290$ ) and LPA = lack of professional achievement ( $F = .697$ ), BCa = bias-corrected and accelerated estimates, CI = confidence interval.

Table 4 revealed that emotional fatigue ( $F(1, 282) = .445$ ,  $\beta = -.040$ ,  $SE = .048$ ,  $t = .667$ ,  $p > 0.01$ , 95% CI = LL -.057 - UL .116), cynicism ( $F(1, 282) = 4.290$ ,  $\beta = -.122$ ,  $SE = .095$ ,  $t = -2.071$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , 95% CI = LL -.415 - UL .021) and lack of professional achievement ( $F(1, 282) = .697$ ,  $\beta = -.050$ ,  $SE = .076$ ,  $t = -.835$ ,  $p > 0.01$ , 95% CI = LL -.241 - UL .114) were negative predictors of context performance among VELs at public universities. The corresponding adjusted R-square (-.002, .011, -.001) also showed that 0.2%, 1.1% and 0.2% of the variations in context performance is impacted by emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement. Since these outcomes support our expectations, hypothesis 2 is also supported in the study.

## Discussion

The analysis results confirm the assumption of the JD-R model proposed by Demerouti, et al., (2001). The results of the analyses support the influence of each of the WB dimensions (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) on each of the JP dimensions (e.g. task and context) among VELs at public universities. The results of the analyses specifically support the major tenet of the JD-R model, which speculated that each of the WB dimensions represent a negative syndrome that influences the poor JP of employees at public institutions. With respect to hypothesis 1, each of the WB dimensions were significant negative predictors of task performance among VELs at public universities. These findings concur with the results of previous studies (e.g., Taris, 2006; Bang & Reio, 2017; Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011), which implies that each of the WB dimensions were significant negative predictors of task performance among VELs at public universities. As far as the authors know, this is a novel finding in vocational education and training research, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria. However, different field of study may show similar results in different work situation or context. Therefore, each of the WB dimensions (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) has become high-interest variables of inquiry for work and

organizational psychology researchers and human resource management researchers and practitioners (Maricutoiu, Sulea & Iancu, 2017).

The results of the hypotheses 2 specifically support the hypotheses proposed by Bang and Reio (2017) that each of the WB dimensions (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) were significant negative predictors of context performance of employees. Further results also relate to the hypotheses proposed by Wu, Hu and Zheng (2019) that WB negatively associate with JP of employees. In all, lack of professional achievement increases at the same time with emotional fatigue and cynicism because lack of professional achievement appear to emanate from lack of relevant job resources, while emotional fatigue and cynicism appear to emanate from lack of organizational support, colleagues/HODs support, and excess workload, as speculated by the bulk of relevant research literature (Bang & Reio, 2017; Demerouti, Bakker & Leiter, 2014). Lack of organizational support, colleagues/HODs support and excess workload seem to be the main predictors of job demand which, in turn, may lead to poor JP component (e.g. context performance) of employees or the VELs at public universities.

## CONCLUSION

The study results established a negative relationship between each WB parameters (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) and each of the JP components (e.g. task and context) among VELs at public universities. The results may be relevant when HEIs (e.g. universities) expect greater JP from VELs. HEIs can foster better JP of employee by implementing a challenging and resourceful work environment. Therefore, this study has practical implications in the WB literature. This study complements the existing literature of organizational support theory (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2014; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), proposing that providing a challenging and resourceful work environment is an important mechanism that could help foster better JP among employees. Specifically, different practices foster better JP among employees (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). These include ensuring that the facility's procedures are fair and that employees perceive it to be fair. Maintaining open communication channels; Demonstration of recognition of professional achievements; Adapt work schedules to employee needs. We provide our employees with the skills and resources they need through training and coaching. These are just a few examples that can be implemented to improve JP among the employees of an organization.

Despite the contribution of the study compared to the existing literature, several limitations were identified. However, the study provided empirical evidence for the

relationship between each WB dimension (e.g. emotional fatigue, cynicism, and lack of professional achievement) and each JP component (e.g. task and context) between VELs in public universities. First, because the authors applied a correlational design, the authors could not make causal inferences. Although, the results from the empirical analyses have supported the conceptual model, which other research models could as well do (Stone-Romero & Rosopa, 2010). Therefore, the authors recommend other research designs (e.g. longitudinal or experimental) for causal inferences. Second, because sample size were intentionally drawn from a specific geographic area or region, care should be taken when discussing and generalizing the results. Therefore, the authors expect to use proportional sampling over a wider geographic area in future studies and apply multi-step analysis to compare with the results of this study. Third, since the authors used only the VEL of public universities as respondents, caution is needed when extending the results to instructors in other fields of study. Therefore, the authors expect further studies to include other lecturers in other academic fields to determine the consistency of results.

A fourth limitation is that while research focuses on the relationship between WB measures and JP components between VELs in public universities, there may be other measures of well-being at work that may predict different JP behavioural contexts between VELs in public universities. Therefore, the authors look forward to further research to explore the relationship between other dimensions of well-being at work (e.g. work addiction or job satisfaction) and other JP behaviours (e.g. retirement intentions or prosocial behaviour). The authors also expect future studies to focus on moderators or mediators of the relationship between each of the WB dimensions and each of the JP components among VELs at public universities.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the research results, the following recommendations were made:

1. University administrators should endeavour to device strategic means of implementing a challenging and resourceful working environment as this will help provide the chance for VELs to engage in better task performance.
2. University administrators should endeavour to device strategic means of implementing a challenging and resourceful working environment as this will help provide the chance for VELs to engage in better context performance.

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