

THE RELATIONSHIPS OF PERCEIVED SUPERVISOR AND PEER SUPPORT ON
JOB EMBEDDEDNESS AND TURNOVER INTENT IN SPECIAL OPERATIONS

POST COVID-19

by

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic created a societal recalculation based on a situation where mass populations were sent into isolation. Research noted the need for meaningfulness and intimacy creating a psychological imbalance that resulted in withdrawal from work and a reinvestment in higher priorities, called the Great Resignation. These cascading effects continue to negatively impact morale and performance, something that U.S. Special Operations cannot afford as the premier global combatant command. From a pool of 140 Special Operations participants data was collected through an anonymous survey to quantitatively assess correlational relationships among perceived peer support, perceived supervisor support, job embeddedness, and turnover intent in post-pandemic Special Operations. This study concluded that high levels of perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support have a significant relationship with turnover intent, further analysis revealed the strongest relationship nested within perceived supervisor support. Further synthesis of data revealed a significant correlation between perceived peer support, perceived supervisory support, and job embeddedness. The study also concluded that perceived peer support had the strongest relationship with job embeddedness. This concept finds Scriptural grounding in the relationships between Christ, His disciples, and their interactions. Solomon famously addressed the importance of peer support when he stated that “iron sharpens iron”.

Keywords: Job embeddedness, perceived supervisor support, perceived peer support, turnover intent.

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Dedication

Thank you to my best friend and savior, Jesus Christ. I am grateful for the quiet talks and the reminders that You are listening. With Him all things are possible, and without Him nothing is worthwhile.

Thank you to my family and friends who have endured, encouraged, and loved me through school, deployments, and life. My wife, Michaela, whose strength has helped hold our family together and whose knife-hand kept me at task. To my daughter, Mason, who always finds good in others and lives her faith. To my son, Andrew, who never fails to make me laugh, stands with courage, and never fails to let us know he loves us. Thank you to my friends who answered the call with courage when fear was abound, strength when tired, and selflessness. You embody lifelong commitment to service. I am thankful to my brothers who wear that green badge of courage. Your words of encouragement, tough love, and humor have helped more than you know.

Thank you, Dr. Lindsey, for your unwavering encouragement and patience. Your feedback and guidance through this process have been instrumental. Thank you, Dr. Piferi, for taking time from an incredibly busy schedule to help all of us “wayward” students finish this last leg of our journey.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic presented an intractable scenario where mass populations were sent into isolation prompting a societal recalculation. Todorova et al. (2021) noted that during this time, individuals contemplated their isolation and struggled with separation from family and loved ones. The complex environment created a deep need for meaningfulness, aimed at establishing an equilibrium between individual values and situational meaning. As the need for intimacy became dominant it created a shift of priority and a withdrawal from efforts at work, creating the Great Resignation (Cypress, 2022; Plante, 2023; Schmid & Melkote, 2022). The unprecedented surge in turnover resulted in critical labor shortages leading to a war for talent, from which no organization was immune (Meriac et al., 2022). From there, a pervasive turnover created a dearth of proficiency that manifested as an additional burden for the remaining workforce, creating feelings of frustration and eventual burnout (Oprea et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2018). This phenomenon could be exacerbated within organizations structured to function within high-stress environments.

Job embeddedness is an anti-withdrawal construct that summarizes the interdependent psychological factors, both inside and outside the workplace, that influence an individual's attachment to their job (Mitchell et al., 2001). These influences coalesce from a complex blend of organizational, occupational, and community-based factors (Sessa & Bowling, 2021). Dechawantanapaisal (2022) found that this psychological entrenchment engenders a sense of obligation in an employee, creating difficulty when faced with opportunities to leave. One of the fundamental antecedents of

job-embeddedness is perceived organizational support, developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986). This appraisal construct is a comprehensive evaluation of an organization's commitment based on perceived support (Sessa & Bowling, 2021). An individual's perception crystallizes through several engagements with the organization, its representatives, and its peers. An influential facet of perceived organizational support centers around the leader-member exchange based on supervisor organizational embodiment or transference (Costa et al., 2022). This distinctive influence provides a key venue for ethical leadership to insulate from burnout and decrease turnover intent through the self-enhancement process (Donovan, 2022; Sessa & Bowling, 2021).

Background

The days that centered around the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and His resurrection embody leadership's influence on job embeddedness and commitment in diverse organizations operating in stressful environments. Scripture recalls how Christ spoke to His disciples concerning how He was to be crucified, but then would come the resurrection (*King James Version, 1796/2012, Matthew 16*). Although the disciples faced unparalleled times, their relationship with Christ anchored their faith and understanding that Heaven was their home to the extent of reinforcing their commitment unto martyrdom. The unprecedented global pandemic of 2020 created an upheaval in the lives of individuals and organizations that continues to echo today (Schmid & Melkote, 2022). As nations closed borders and individuals were cast into isolation as a measure to stop the spread of the virus, a worldwide reassessment of social values occurred. Todorova et al. (2021) noted that isolation had an overwhelming impact on individuals as they searched to establish a balance between their situation and their individual values through

meaningfulness. This societal recalculation created an internal strategy to find harmony that included a withdrawal from work efforts. Internal recalibration is paralleled in Scripture, evidenced by Paul's epistle to the church at Corinth, where he articulates, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, 2 Corinthians 5:17). This individual recalibration of purpose and value through Christ correspondingly initiated transformative shifts in society.

The pandemic's profound impact on society subsequently generated the Great Resignation, resulting in a deficit of professionals that continues to reverberate throughout the workforce (Cypress, 2022; Plante, 2023; Schmid & Melkote, 2022). In the wake of substantial turnover, a war for talent unfolded to address critical gaps in personnel, which exacerbated the deficit in proficiency. Consequently, this situation generated waves of increased workload for the remaining workforce resulting in feelings of frustration, burnout, and turnover (Oprea et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2018). Research by Bennett (2018) discovered that burnout contributes to 40% of all turnovers and can cost upwards of \$14 billion annually (Alavi et al., 2022). Chambers-Baltz et al. (2022) noted this correlation hinged strongly on the perceived imbalance between organizational support, resources, and demands. The incongruence between an employee's situation and their values fosters feelings of burnout, leading to decreased commitment and increased turnover intent (Alavi et al., 2022). The Great Resignation coupled with individuals continued search for meaningfulness in their lives propelled the work environment along a trajectory toward increased burnout. Scriptural wisdom gives key insight, as Matthew records Jesus's words about meaningfulness and being overburdened, "Come unto Me,

all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you
..... For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (*King James Version, 1796/2012,*
Matthew 11:28-30).

Viewed through the lens of job embeddedness, the field of Industrial and Organizational Psychology examines the phenomenon of retention and commitment. This anti-withdrawal construct is a holistic assessment of commitment based on three critical components (fit, link, and sacrifice) spanning both on-the-job and off-the-job domains (Sessa & Bowling, 2021). Dirican and Erdil (2020) concluded that these factors aggregate into an intricate tapestry of varying tethers that anchor an individual to an organization and thereby lower withdrawal and turnover intent (Burrows et al., 2022; Dechawantanapaisal, 2022). The off-the-job tethering centers around community-based factors, encompassing the meaningfulness derived through their association and the cost if these connections were severed. Scriptural wisdom finds a parallel in that we are ambassadors for Christ with a heavenly home (*King James Version, 1796/2012, Hebrews 13:14; 2 Corinthians 5:20*). The realm of on-the-job factors center on compatibility with an employee's work and has a strong correlation to job satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment (Nolan et al., 2016). This component is strongly tied to the construct of perceived organizational support through the common theoretical foundation of social exchange theory (Karim & Nadeem, 2019; Sessa & Bowling, 2021). Just as organizations seek to gauge and forecast an individual's commitment to the organizational mission, individuals similarly seek to ascertain the extent of the organization's dedication to their well-being. Perceived organizational support is a self-evaluative construct encapsulating an individual's perceived organizational value.

Scripture illuminates our heavenly value, as stated, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Romans 5:8). This underscores God’s profound valuation for us, demonstrated through His sacrifice for an atonement of our sin before we were even members within the organizational fold.

Costa et al. (2022) stated that leader-member exchange exerted the most substantial influence on perceived organizational support based on the construct of supervisor organizational embodiment. The framework of transference posits that the organization acquires anthropomorphic properties that allow the individual to assign traits and deduce commitment. This construct is strengthened because of the supervisor’s pivotal role in mediating communication between the employee and the organization. Analogously, this construct is akin to how Christ is our intercessor (Chambers-Baltz et al., 2022; Dirican & Erdil, 2020; *King James Version*, 1796/2012, Romans 8:34). Research conducted by Donovan (2022) and Smyth and Zimba (2019) revealed that when high levels of perceived organizational support were coupled with healthy leader-member exchanges, it resulted in a reduction of withdrawal and turnover intent.

Leadership represents an intricate multifaceted calculation whose success depends on the correct manipulation of multiple various variables encompassing traits, skills, and behaviors that culminate in motivational and inspirational influence (Spector, 2017). The optimal concentration of these variables aggregated for the correct formula is largely debated. A comprehensive meta-analysis conducted by Green and Gini (2014) discovered that all the formulas can be reduced to three primary components: character, stewardship, and experience. Scriptural correlation shows that when the Pharisees questioned Jesus

about the greatest commandments, He declared to love God with all of your heart and then to love your neighbor as yourself (*King James Version*, 1620/2236, Matthew 22:36-39). These key principles speak to a deep moral compass and a bedrock of selflessness, the tenants of ethical leadership.

Graupensperger et al. (2021) established that leadership is critical in shaping team dynamics, steering them toward entropy or integration. Kim's (2017) research noted the distinctive capability of ethical leadership to insulate organizations and individuals from burnout and withdrawal while fostering cohesion and unity despite personality differences. Scripture accounts Christ's followers as a diverse group of individuals marked with antagonistic differences. Individuals, who prior to Christ, would have shared only a realm of disdain for the other. According to Scripture, Matthew was a Levite (the tribe of priests) turned Roman tax collector (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Mark 2:13). The contrarian, Simon the Zealot, was a member of an organization ardently advocating for Israel's independence from Rome (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, 2 Matthew 10:4). John, James, Peter, and Andrew were fishermen under Roman rule and subject to taxation while being caught in the middle of any Zealot actions (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Matthew 4:18-22). Despite the foundational diversity among these individuals, which should have driven them apart, they remained unified through Christ.

Scripture details the profound relationship between Jesus and His disciples. This relationship moved beyond the conventional leader-member exchange as Christ exemplified a transformational ethical leader and called them to a higher purpose than themselves. A transformational ethical leader has five fundamental traits to inspire change. According to Northouse's (2019) and Srivastava and Pinto's (2022) research the

ethical leader must embody the traits, values, and beliefs they want from their followers. A transformational leader must understand the strategic vision to lead others where to go. Furthermore, their lives must infuse moral underpinnings into the strategic objectives. A pivotal aspect is their adeptness in clearly articulating and communicating higher expectations. Finally, their capacity to anchor all decisions within the moral framework to align actions with a higher purpose stands as the concluding trait (Northouse, 2019; Srivastava & Pinto, 2022). Jesus consistently embodied all these traits as displayed at the Feast of the Passover when He addresses His disciples. Jesus tells them that He is “the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, John 14:6). Scripture provides assurance that adversity is inevitable; how such times are handled and the personal walk toward righteousness defines the individual.

Problem Statement

Research has revealed that the global COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed a recalibration of personal values within society, resulting in a deep impact on workplace commitment and a mass exodus referred to as the Great Resignation (Meriac et al., 2022; Montaudon-Thomas et al., 2023; Schmid & Melkote, 2022). Todorova et al. (2021) assessed people’s greatest concerns during isolation, which revolved around the disconnection from loved ones. The amalgamation of uncertainty, loneliness, frustration, and burnout created a reflection point that led to withdrawal and reevaluation of priorities (Cypress, 2022; Plante, 2023; Schmid & Melkote, 2022). Todorova et al. (2021) found that individuals sought meaningfulness, striving for balance between their values and circumstances. The societal recalibration created a withdrawal effect as individuals

sought value in other areas. Turnover and withdrawal are critical enemies of retention, the lifeblood of an organization. Withdrawal is the manifestation of an attempt to rebalance internal scales by investing in other activities for meaningfulness (Jex & Britt, 2004; Klotz & Bolino, 2016; Liao et al., 2008; Wang & Wang, 2020).

Job embeddedness is an anti-withdrawal construct that encompasses the broad interdependent psychological factors that influence an individual's life within and beyond the workplace (Mitchell et al., 2001). This psychological construct encapsulates the myriad of influences that impact an individual's commitment calculation (Porter et al., 2018; Sessa & Bowling, 2021). The critical components of on-the-job fit and links are largely summarized by perceived organizational support, a self-reflective construct whereby an individual assesses an organization's commitment to their well-being (Burrows et al., 2022; Caesens et al., 2017; Nolan et al., 2016). Perceived organizational support is anchored within four primary antecedents, with the strongest being the leader-member exchange based on the supervisor organizational embodiment (Costa et al., 2022).

Leadership is a multifaceted calculation of traits, skills, and behaviors that foster inspiration and motivation (Spector, 2017). Reiley and Jacobs (2016) concluded that a follower's perception of their leader's ethical foundation profoundly influenced their effectiveness. Transformational leadership stands out among other leadership styles as it motivates and influences others to achieve noble goals through ethical inspiration (Spector, 2017; Srivastava & Pinto, 2022). While there is existing research on the impact of transformational leadership on job embeddedness, there had been no research conducted within the Special Operations community post-pandemic.

The term “Special Operations Forces” is an overarching term that represents the most elite personnel and units across all military branches. Common to all branches is an arduous selection process and rigorously competitive training pipeline, marked by attrition rates ranging from 85% - 95%, requiring unparalleled commitment before being assigned to a unit (Frueh et al., 2020). This distinctive community is continually subject to global requirements and is anticipated to regularly deploy small elements into high-risk regions with minimal support (Black et al., 2018). Despite the impact of COVID-19’s societal recalculation, coupled with sacrifice, excessive expectations, and dangerous conditions these individuals continue to be hallmarked by their unwavering commitment.

U.S. Special Operations is an understudied occupational population that is largely closed off to outside communities, formulating isolated pockets of sub-culture. These individuals are largely skeptical of outsiders and the rules that govern operational security largely restrict access. All data that is collected and published must first adhere to strict public affairs guidance, creating difficulty for any researcher. It is not enough to understand the correlation between ethical leadership, peer support, and job embeddedness; there is a need to research this phenomenon inside this unique society because it perseveres in its commitment and thrives in unprecedented hardships.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship, if any, between perceived peer support and perceived supervisor support with job embeddedness and turnover intent in Special Operations post-pandemic.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between perceived peer support and job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

RQ3: Will perceived peer support or perceived supervisor support have a stronger relationship, if any, to job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between perceived peer support and turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

RQ6: Will perceived peer support or perceived supervisor support have a stronger relationship, if any to turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Perceived supervisor support will be significantly related to job embeddedness within Special Operation Forces.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived peer support will be significantly related with job embeddedness within Special Operation Forces.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant mean difference between perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support's relationship on job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces.

Hypothesis 4: Perceived supervisor support is significantly related to turnover intent within Special Operation Forces.

Hypothesis 5: Perceived peer support is significantly related to turnover intent within Special Operation Forces.

Hypothesis 6: There will be a mean difference between perceived supervisor support and perceived supervisor support's relationship on turnover intent in Special Operation Forces.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

Assumptions

It is assumed that all participants belong to the Special Operations Community for greater than one or more years and underwent a selection process regardless of their branch of the military. For the purpose of this study, it is necessary to assume the sample population is able to read and willing to participate and that they were not unduly compelled. By making the test anonymous, it is assumed that all participants answer honestly and to the best of their ability.

Limitations

One of the key limitations associated with this study is the self-reporting aspect that may lead toward common method variance (Dirican & Erdil, 2020). There are potential limitations with a cross-sectional survey because it captures the culminative feelings of past experiences. This could be mitigated with a longitudinal design. Additionally, initial enlistees may need to accumulate more experience to draw from to provide the best answer. Another limitation of this study is the exploration of only organizational embodiment by ethical leaders in organizations with a positive reputation

and that it does not address organizations that have negative reputations and ethical leaders.

Theoretical Foundations of the Study

This study leveraged the research theory of perceived organizational support to map a path from two pivotal antecedents of perceived organizational support (perceived leadership support and perceived peer support) to job embeddedness and turnover intent. The first theory associated with this study is job embeddedness theory, pioneered by Mitchell et al. (2001). This workplace attitude draws from Lewin's (1951) Field theory to formulate a comprehensive assessment of influential factors to evaluate an individual's commitment to the organization. This concept considers both on-the-job and off-the-job components to calculate the cost of leaving. Paul speaks to this construct when he explains to the church at Corinth that, "we are ambassadors for Christ" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, 2 Corinthians 5:20). This phrase suggests that we are now citizens of Heaven through Christ creating a constellation of tether points that go beyond the influences of employment. The theoretical foundations of this study flow from job embeddedness to perceived organizational support through the shared underpinnings of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and social identity theory.

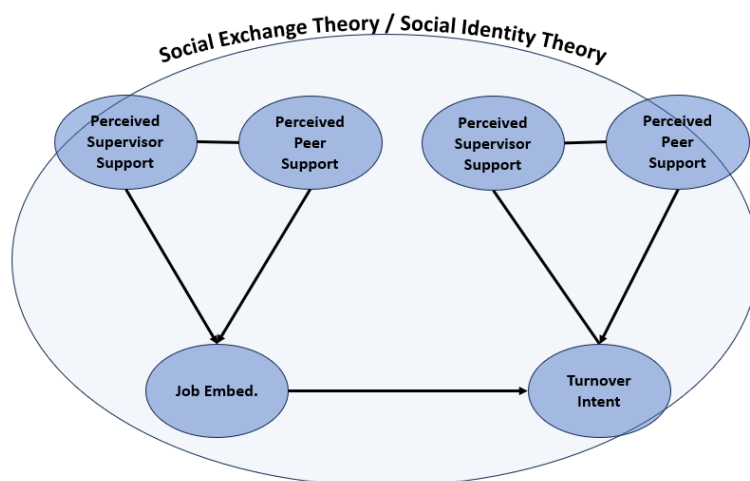
Perceived organizational support was pioneered by Eisenberger et al. (1986) to measure the employee's perceived self-value within the organization. Perceived organizational support seeks to answer an essential fundamental question, "Am I valued?" An individual's organizational value is based on the microeconomics of cost and reward. Scripture answers this by affirming that, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (*King James*

Version, 1796/2012, Romans 5:8). God valued us enough to sacrifice Himself before we were even members of His Kingdom.

The strongest antecedent of perceived organizational support nests within the leader-member exchange based on the construct of supervisor organizational embodiment or transference (Costa et al., 2022). Scripture reaffirms our value by declaring that God will never leave us or forsake us (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Deuteronomy 31:6; Hebrews 13:5). Jesus embodied this declaration while on the Cross when he asked, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Luke 23:34). Our leader openly declares that He loves us and was willing to die for us and raise again to intercede for us. His actions demonstrate the most profound antecedent of perceived organizational support (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Romans 8:34; Sessa & Bowling, 2021). Christ’s profound impact on His followers created lifelong commitments that endured hardships and unto death. The combination of these theoretical constructs is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Theoretical Framework for Study



Definition of Terms

The following is a list of definitions of terms that are used in this study.

Field Theory – the theoretical construct that behavior is the summation of social interactions that coexist and are interdependent and impinge on an individual (Lewin, 1951).

Job Embeddedness – A theoretical construct purposes that the intent to leave consists of a broad set of interdependent psychological factors that originate both inside and outside the organization they work. These factors formulate a constellation of influences that impact an individual’s decision to stay or leave an organization (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Perceived Organizational Support – A self-evaluative construct whereby an individual assesses the value an organization places on their contributions and concern for their overall well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Social Exchange Theory – This theoretical construct posits that when an individual acts in a beneficial manner towards another individual, it creates a social debt of reciprocity (Blau, 1964).

Social Identity Theory – This theory states that individuals categorize themselves and others into in-groups and out-groups according to key attributes. Individuals then formulate their social identity based on this categorization and define themselves by the groups they associate with. Based on this theory, individuals seek membership in organizations they admire to improve their self-esteem and define their social identity (Sessa & Bowling, 2021).

Special Operations Forces – an overarching term that represents the most elite personnel and units within each branch of the military. These units consist of Special

Forces, Rangers, SEALs, Marine Special Operations Command, Pararescue, etc. (Frueh et al., 2020).

The Great Resignation – a worldwide phenomenon that references the massive exodus of individuals quitting their job during the COVID-19 pandemic (Montaudon-Thomas et al., 2023)

Ethical Leadership – This style leads, motivates, and influences others to achieve noble goals through ethical inspiration (Spector, 2017; Srivastava & Pinto, 2022).

Significance of the Study

The COVID-19 pandemic set in motion the Great Resignation and created an aggressive turnover and turnover intent within the workforce. As individuals were sent into a form of isolation to combat the spread of the virus, it created a societal recalculation of values that resulted in withdrawal from the workplace. Research by Todorova et al. (2021) highlighted that as individuals reflected on their situation, they identified a void in meaningfulness that created a search for balance between internal values and contextual meaning. The massive withdrawal and refocus created a cascading deficit of professional proficiency that manifested into a war for talent that continues to echo today (Cypress, 2022; Meriac et al., 2022). This rapid and unexpected turnover created deep feelings of frustration and burnout that resulted in turnover and spiraling withdrawal (Oprea et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2018).

Job embeddedness is an anti-withdrawal construct that considers the broad interdependent psychological factors that influence an individual's life both inside and outside the workplace (Mitchell et al., 2001). One of the key antecedents of job embeddedness is perceived organizational support. Academic studies have shown a

significant correlation between increased levels of perceived organizational support and decreased levels of burnout and turnover (Alvani et al., 2022; Al Zamel et al., 2020; Greco et al., 2021). The greatest influential factor to increased levels of perceived organizational support centers around quality leader-member exchange based on supervisor organizational embodiment or transference (Costa et al., 2022).

The term “Special Operations Forces” is an overarching term that represents the most elite personnel and units within each branch of the military. Individuals must voluntarily complete an arduous selection and final training process with 85% - 95% attrition rates prior to admittance (Frueh et al., 2020). All units maintain a high-operational tempo with demanding training cycles to support regular deployments into high-risk environments. During these cycles individuals are required to maintain conventional military proficiency as well as seek out unique individual skills that contribute to the overall mission (Black et al., 2018). Despite the impact of COVID-19’s societal recalculation coupled with sacrifice, excessive expectations, and dangerous conditions; these individuals continue to be hallmarked by their unwavering commitment. This study would be the first of its kind inside of the Special Operations Community post-COVID-19 and would provide unique insights into the commitment aspects of individuals who are expected to operate autonomously at a strategic level. This study would expand the current body of research in theory and provide unique venues for strategic interdiction for turnover intent and insulate against burnout in high-stress environments.

Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic created a global societal recalculation as people sought out meaningfulness to create a balance between personal values and situational meaning (Todorova et al., 2021). The search for meaningfulness caused a socioeconomic recalculation and reinvestment strategy in areas outside of work, creating the Great Resignation (Cypress, 2022; Plante, 2023). This unprecedented withdrawal catalyzed a shortfall of critical workers resulting in a proficiency deficit that left the remaining workers with feelings of frustration and burnout. The Great Resignation reinforced the Special Operations Forces' truths that humans are more important than hardware, and quality people cannot be mass-produced in a time of crisis (Kiras, 2019). This unique society regularly deals with excessive demands and works within high-stress environments autonomously. Examining perceived organizational support and perceived peer support's impacts on turnover intent within the Special Operations Community would provide unique insight into interdiction strategies to reduce turnover intent and insulate against burnout.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Chapter Two contains an amalgamation of comprehensive research focusing on several key dimensions. These dimensions include the Great Resignation, turnover, job embeddedness, perceived organizational support, perceived leader and peer support inside the Special Operations community, and a Biblical foundation for the study. This chapter establishes a foundational framework by drawing from historical contexts and theoretical foundations. The introduction of relative literature is introduced to contextualize the research, along with recent developments and changes to our understanding of these constructs pertinent to job embeddedness's relationship to turnover intent.

The literature review builds contextual foundation by examining the relationship of perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support on job embeddedness and turnover intent within the Special Operations Community following the COVID-19 pandemic. The subsequent focus of the review centers around the construct of job embeddedness, an anti-withdrawal construct that encompasses influences both on-the-job and off-the-job that creates an attachment web (Burrows et al., 2022). This chapter details the influence of perceived organizational support as a self-reflective workplace attitude whereby individuals assess their organizational wealth based on meaningful interactions. Additionally, the antecedents of perceived organizational support are discussed. Ethical and servant leadership are discussed because of their direct ties to the theoretical underpinnings of job embeddedness and organizational support. A pivotal component, the integration of a Biblical worldview is thoroughly examined, showcasing the alignment

between Scriptural principles and the research's themes. Perceived organizational support is an introspective construct that asks, "Does the institution value me?" This notion resonates with Paul's teachings, as he reminds us of God's unwavering love, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (*King James Version, 1796/2012, Romans 5:8*).

Description of Search Strategy

A literature review was data mined exclusively through Liberty University's Jerry Falwell Library through the Google Chrome web browser utilizing Boolean logic to help narrow the focus and eliminate irrelevant points. The Jerry Falwell Library provided access to several psychology databases, including APA PsycNet, ProQuest, PsycTests, JSTOR, and EBSCO Host Quick Search. Searches were limited to peer-reviewed journals and articles written in English within the last five years to ensure the most recent and relevant data was captured. Additionally, Google and Google Scholar were utilized to access referenced and unavailable information through the Jerry Falwell Library.

The initial search was specifically targeted to examine the confluence of job embeddedness and perceived organizational support to assess the scope of the topic. The initial data mining efforts unveiled a depth of the problem that was too broad to yield tangible insights. The culmination of this initial data pull underscored the necessity for a methodical series of refined research efforts. Sequential explorations were cast using a systematic approach, employing Boolean logic to narrow the focus and erect the thematic framework. Systematic searches with the primary variables of perceived organizational support and job embeddedness cast within their associated theological framework, social exchange theory, and social identity theory created search patterns that narrowed the

results. The follow-on searches focused on antecedents and lashing points to show correlation potential. The concerted effort was designed to reveal connections and illuminate the interwoven theoretical dynamics.

Biblical research was conducted through a rigorous Scriptural analysis, in-depth examination of pastoral sermons, and discussions with fellow Christian peers. These discussions centered heavily on our relationship with God the Father through Christ Jesus as the embodiment of perceived organizational support. Christ's examples and teachings are the bedrock foundation of ethical leadership. His actions create relationships that manifest into more substantial levels of commitment, therefore fostering a more profound sense of job embeddedness. The synthesis of Biblical and historical inquiries concluded that the strength of commitment to Christ has resulted in individuals dedicating their lives fully to His service, even to the point of martyrdom. The epochs of history underscore the remarkable power of commitment, reinforcing the nexus between unwavering faith, deepened relationships, and dedication.

Literature Review

Introduction

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted a profound societal recalibration when workers were sent into isolation in an attempt to combat the global pandemic. Todorova et al. (2021) found that during this unprecedented phenomenon, individuals were led to contemplate their isolation and seek meaningfulness in an attempt to create a balance between individual values and situational meaning. This societal recalculation subsequently catalyzed a seismic shift in the workforce. Employees

considered their vocational pursuits, resulting in a widespread withdrawal that has come to be known as the Great Resignation (Cypress, 2022; Plante, 2023; Schmid & Melkote, 2022). This resultant exodus of professionals created a critical shortfall of workers that continues to resonate today, generating a war for talent (Meriac et al., 2022). This abrupt and extensive turnover created a domino effect that left a proficiency deficit, and increased employee feelings of frustration and burnout (Oprea et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2018).

Current research examines retention and commitment under the lens of job embeddedness. This counter-withdrawal construct meticulously encapsulates a tapestry woven from both on-the-job and off-the-job influences that create a web of attachment. This construct has three fundamental components: fit, links, and sacrifice, which coalesce to form a cohesive whole (Burrows et al., 2022; Sessa & Bowling, 2021). The fit component speaks to how the employee perceives their compatibility with the organization through their skills and leader-member fit. Conversely, the links component speaks to the intricate threads of attachment extending from individuals and activities both within and outside the organization. Lastly, the sacrifice component is the summation of the potential cost entailed by severing ties with the organization (Dirican & Erdil, 2020). This psychological construct shares theoretical underpinnings with the construct of perceived organizational support, a self-reflective paradigm wherein individuals assess their organizational worth (Sessa & Bowling, 2021).

Research is unanimous in highlighting the diverse advantages of perceived organizational support on job embeddedness, organizational commitment, insulation against burnout, and reduction of organizational turnover. This workplace attitude is

based on the employee's perception of how much the organization values their overall well-being and contributions to the organization (Caesens et al., 2017). Building on this research, Costa et al.'s (2022) concluded that individuals derive their organizational value based on several antecedents, with the strongest centering around the leader-member exchange. This self-evaluative concept asks, "Am I valued by my leader and organization?" Paul speaks to this construct when he reminds us that "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Romans 5:8). Anchoring this study within Scripture goes beyond empirical inquiry by illuminating a path for guiding others to a relationship with Christ.

The Great Resignation

The Great Resignation is a worldwide phenomenon that references the massive exodus of individuals quitting their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic (Meriac et al., 2022; Montaudon-Thomas et al., 2023; Schmid & Melkote, 2022). During this unprecedented time, people were sent into a form of isolation in an attempt to curtail the global health crisis. The emotional toll of isolation was recognized throughout the nation as slogans such as "We are all in this together" emerged. Todorova et al.'s (2021) research revealed that people's most significant concerns centered around the struggles of being separated from family and loved ones. Their research cited how losing physical contact and interaction with loved ones became the two dominant needs in people's lives. Feelings of loneliness, frustration, exhaustion, and burnout in the advent of an unprecedented pandemic perpetuated global uncertainty and created an untenable situation. Workers reflected upon the significance of their work contributions and began withdrawing their efforts (Cypress, 2022; Plante, 2023; Schmid & Melkote, 2022).

Todorova et al. (2021) found that reprioritization is part of a process to create harmony and establish meaningfulness with the balance between an individual's values and situational meaning. This research concluded that higher senses of meaningfulness were associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. This societal recalibration of priorities helped balance individual needs but created a workforce deficit with domino effects that continue to affect manpower and performance in all organizations (Todorova et al., 2021).

Subsequently, the Great Resignation reinforced the SOF truths that humans are more important than hardware, and quality people cannot be mass-produced in a time of crisis (Kiras, 2019). Organizations continue to struggle with workforce commitment, as individuals continue to seek employment that aligns with their priorities and offers greater work-life balance. No organization has been immune from this phenomenon, as even government organizations saw a rapid increase in the intent to leave. Historically, government employment has been hallmarked by low turnover intent because of job security, competitive salaries, consistent benefits, and work-life balance (O'Brien, 2022).

The resignation of an aging workforce is an expected variable as generations reach an age of eligibility and pivot toward retirement. The resignation of Baby Boomers from employment was expected during the pandemic as they reached the juncture of retirement and societal recalibration towards meaningfulness (Schmid & Melkote, 2022). As this sizeable workforce began to withdraw it created a fertile bed for promotion. Advancement into more senior leadership roles would offer the opportunity for a more significant impact, greater benefits, and a greater sense of control, all anti-withdrawal

constructs (Alvani et al., 2022; Al Zamel et al., 2020; Greco et al., 2021). However, the advent of the Great Resignation resonated across multiple generations within the workforce. Several scholars argue that the Great Recession was a culmination of several events that manifested in a crescendo of withdrawal from the workplace (Meriac et al., 2022; Schmid & Melkote, 2022).

Cultural Antecedents to the Great Resignation

Montaudon-Thomas et al. (2023) noted several significant societal movements that occurred in the decade leading up to the Great Resignation that set the stage for societal recalculation. Multiple societal movements converged during the COVID-19 pandemic experience to shape the workforce's perspective. Drawing from historical events for context, the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2012 emerged as a protest against corporate corruption, highlighting inequalities and income disparities caused by corporate executives. This movement's purpose was to inspire corporations and organizations to foster a more balanced distribution of wealth and opportunity (History, 2021). The YOLO (You Only Live Once) movement promoted a *carpe diem* mentality that emphasized an individual's personal life as the center focus, a construct that is exacerbated through the influence of social media (Bellis et al., 2022).

Furthermore, there were the anti-work movements that had gained traction due to the lack of perceived dignity in the workplace. These movements focused on the inequalities, inadequate benefits, and common salary discrepancies among the labor force. These movements advocated for employee self-empowerment and the withdrawal from hostile or disrespectful work environments (Montaudon-Thomas et al., 2023). Before the Great Resignation, there was a growing trend where anger and frustration

from employees began to deliberately impede productivity. This trend persisted and intensified during the pandemic. As people began to leverage social media as a means to counteract isolation, employees found a supportive platform to express their discontent in toxic work environments (Bellis et al., 2022). The stressors stemming from the pandemic only magnified the perception of despondent leaders and corporate greed, resulting in voluntary turnover that has continued to ripple throughout the workforce (Montaudon-Thomas et al., 2023).

Turnover

Employee turnover emerged as a significant issue that reached a critical level during the Great Resignation and continues to reverberate throughout the workplace. Wang and Wang (2020) defined turnover as the all-inclusive manifestation of employee discontent with an organization. This multifaceted calculus centers on contributors such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Wang & Wang, 2020). The corrosive repercussions of turnover and turnover intent can be felt throughout an organization. Employees who express intentions of quitting or turnover often emotionally disengage from the organization and have lower levels of commitment (Aisbett & Hoyle, 2014; Dechawantanapaisal, 2022).

Turnover robs a workplace of institutional experience and knowledge, creating a costly deficit that requires replacement. Research by Treglown et al.'s (2018) demonstrated that the replacement of an individual could incur a cost of up to 200% of the departing employee's salary. Oprea et al. (2022) and Chambers-Baltz et al. (2022) noted that turnover has a profound impact on organizational performance because of the loss of tacit knowledge crucial for navigating the organization's political landscape and

understanding key processes. Mid-level management departure is critical because of the structural lashing between an organization's tactical and strategic levels. These individuals are a critical component in synergizing coordination patterns and organizational processes across the workforce (Oprea et al., 2020).

The impact of the loss of a mid-level employee now translates to the redistribution of informal tasks that they accumulated over time to ensure seamless operational congruence, thereby creating more work for those left behind (Chambers-Baltz et al., 2022). Regrettably, these tasks might only become recognized once a critical failure point is reached. Dechawantanapaisal's (2022) research supported this concept and illustrated how an employee's departure of skills and knowledge can have adverse effects that reach an entire workforce, manifesting in increased workload, frustration, and burnout. Griffiths and Royse (2017) observed that when government child welfare caseworkers departed, this created a cascading effect of heavier workloads and a detraction from visits and investigations. These factors can ultimately lead to decreased morale and heightened intent to leave.

Klotz and Bolino's (2016) research underscored that an employee's resignation or farewell letter could provide direct insight into the factors driving their departure. Based on the social exchange theory, the method and statements made during their departure can reflect the measures they feel would balance their internal social equity scale. Higher levels of perceived organizational support often result in employee resignations that are respectful and beneficial to the organization. Research consistently affirms that negative resignation styles often reflect a toxic work environment, characterized by abusive leadership, and extreme burnout. When employees quit a toxic work environment, they

are likely to resign in a dysfunctional manner to redress previous wrongs and balance their equity scale (Klotz & Bolino, 2016).

Antecedents of Turnover

Turnover stems from a variety of factors, with burnout, bullying, and perceived devaluing of the employee emerging as predominant contributors. Burnout has been discovered to account for 40% of all turnovers, according to Bennett (2018), costing up to \$14 billion annually (Alavi et al., 2022). Research by Chambers-Baltz et al. (2022) found a correlation between burnout and turnover intent because of a systemic imbalance between organizational support, available resources, and demands. Burnout causes an internal imbalance that negatively affects the organization and reduces commitment, therefore leading to increased turnover intent (Alavi et al., 2022). Griffiths and Royse's (2017) research revealed that one of the prime contributors to government child welfare workers' turnover was the consistent feeling of being undervalued and burned out. This theme is echoed in the field of nursing, where Shorey & Wong (2021) noted burnout was a substantial factor in employee turnover.

Repeated studies confirm that critical intervention strategies should be positioned to foster a greater perception of organizational support to mitigate turnover (Alvani et al., 2022; Al Zamel et al., 2020; Greco et al., 2021). This intervention approach finds support in the research by Klotz and Bolino (2016), who stated that turnover rates tended to decrease when there was a perceived reciprocal investment by the organization into the individual. Additionally, their research also made the correlation that when there was a lack of perceived organizational support, employees tended to respond with negative resignations that subsequently fostered corrosive effects. Research shows that perceived

organizational support can insulate individuals from burnout and increase retention (Alvani et al., 2022).

Withdrawal

The construct of withdrawal distinguishes itself from turnover intent and represents the behavior of detachment from one commitment in favor of another. Within the workplace context, this psychological detachment involves employee actions of distancing themselves from their work situation. Withdrawal can manifest in taking longer breaks, absenteeism, and emotional disconnection. These manifestations represent a decrease in commitment to the organization leading to a degradation of performance that disrupts organizational functioning (Jex & Britt, 2004; Liao et al., 2008). Research reveals that when there is a social exchange imbalance, the individual will seek actions to reestablish equilibrium (Klotz & Bolino, 2016). Withdrawal can serve as a rebalancing of internal psychological scales to find meaningfulness and restore harmony through investing in alternative activities.

Job Embeddedness

Job embeddedness emerged in 2001 as an anti-withdrawal construct that embodies theory and a model for retention. Mitchell et al. (2001) constructed its theoretical framework on field theory, social exchange theory, and social identity theory to formulate a branched network model that encompasses more than job satisfaction. This construct contends that the intent to leave consists of a broad array of interdependent psychological factors that impact an individual's life both inside and outside the organization where they are employed. This workplace attitude summarizes a more

comprehensive assessment of intent to leave compared to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Sessa & Bowling, 2021). This construct captures the summation of non-work and work interrelation psychological, social, and financial influences that bind individuals to the location, people, and place of employment. Porter et al. (2018) referenced the construct as a "web of influences" that impacts an individual's decision to stay or leave an organization.

Research by Dirican and Erdil (2020) concluded that these influential factors are an amalgamation of organizational, occupational, and community-based factors that formulate an array of components that tether an employee to their current job (Burrows et al., 2022; Dechawantanapaisal, 2022). This intricate psychological construct encapsulates the various strengths that formulate the tether that lowers withdrawal and reduces turnover intent. Dechawantanapaisal (2022) observed that this psychological bonding establishes a sense of obligation that creates challenges when faced with opportunities to leave. The components of job embeddedness are characterized as on-the-job fit, off-the-job-fit, links, and sacrifice.

On-the-Job Fit and Off-the-Job Fit

The fit component centers on compatibility and comfort between the employee, organization, and community. According to Mitchell et al.'s (2001) work on job embeddedness, an individual's personal values, ambitions, and aspirations must fit within the overarching corporate culture. On-the-job fit refers to perceived compatibility with an employee's work and has a strong correlation to job satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment (Nolan et al., 2016). This component includes the matching of skills, abilities, and career progression, as well as a personal fit regarding values and

ethics (Burrows et al., 2022). When an individual excels at work due to matched skillsets, it feeds the self-enhancement process and increases self-image. Eveland et al. (2018) found that individuals who share values with an organization tend to cultivate stronger relationships and loyalty. A shared value system reflects the concentration of congruency between behaviors, goals, and a sense of fairness regarding policies. Eveland et al.'s (2018) research noted that shared values establish the bedrock for trust and commitment between entities. Additionally, Mitchel et al. (2001) empirically observed that after 20 months, employees who were less "fit" generally self-terminated faster than those who were "fit."

Off-the-job fit encompasses the individual's assessment of their connection to the broader community. These attachment threads include climate, community activities, schools, amenities, family, friends, political, and religious climates. These domains touch all areas in which an individual could pursue personal interests (Porter et al., 2018; Sessa & Bowling, 2021). The off-the-job fit also considers how well family members integrate into the community. Individuals often seek jobs that offer access to schools and amenities to benefit their families. Porter et al. (2018) found that this coalescing of influences directly correlated to attachment and shaped the withdrawal calculus.

Links

The second component of job embeddedness is the establishment of formal and informal social associations, referred to as "links", that span the relationships between individuals, organizations, and other items (Dechawantanapaisal, 2022). This component encompasses the social, psychological, and economic connections an employee and their family have to the organization and the larger community. Links are formed through

tenure and evolve to provide unique resources that invoke commitment and obligations in the social dynamic (Porter et al., 2018). The theory of job embeddedness argues that the higher the number and greater the strength of these links, the stronger the level of embeddedness thus greater insulation from withdrawal (Mitchell et al., 2001). On-the-job links can include professional associations and closed-knit work groups that influence an individual's social network (Burrows et al., 2022). Off-the-job links extend beyond the work environment and represent social connections within the broader community to include extended family members, volunteer groups, churches, hobbies, and other friends. This construct posits that the more links an individual has within a community and the broader that community is, the more difficult it would be for the individual to voluntarily leave (Dechawantanapaisal, 2022; Mitchell et al., 2001; Sessa & Bowling, 2021).

Sacrifice

The sacrifice component represents an individual's cost analysis between leaving and staying within an organization. This summation assesses the strength required to sever the bonds of commitment for both on-the-job and off-the-job commitments and those associated benefits (Karim & Nadeem, 2019; Sessa & Bowling, 2021; Treuren, 2019). Crossley et al. (2007) referenced the sacrifice component as the aggregation of psychological and material costs associated with leaving an organization or community. On-the-job sacrifice calculations include relinquishing colleagues and invested work projects, as well as costs associated with changing healthcare plans and nonportable benefits like stock options (Mitchell et al., 2001). This calculation also considers potential future benefits, including increased leave, tenure, and salary raises. Off-the-job

sacrifices center around the costs associated with leaving a community. This could include moving away from an attractive area where one's family is respected and has deep ties that offer community-based perks (Dirican & Erdil, 2020; Mitchel et al., 2001; Sessa & Bowling, 2021).

Job Embeddedness Theoretical Foundations

Job Embeddedness and Field Theory

Mitchel (2001) drew inspiration from Lewin's (1951) Field Theory to explain the concept of job embeddedness. Field Theory posits that behavior is the amalgamation of interdependent social interactions that coexist and impact an individual. Lewin (1951) also suggested that along with a comprehensive look at the influences in an individual's life, there should be a focus on how those situations came to be and led to a particular behavior. Field theory lays the foundational underpinning for comprehending the construct of job embeddedness and postulates that one's social context is the best predictor for understanding behavioral trajectories (Li et al., 2022).

Job Embeddedness and Social Exchange Theory

Job embeddedness shares social exchange theory as a common ground that gives foundational touchpoints with several workplace attitudes and relational dynamics in the domain of employee turnover (Karim & Nadeem, 2019; Sessa & Bowling, 2021). Social exchange theory emphasizes the socioeconomic factor of relationships, where emotional benefits, personal attachments, and open-ended obligations play a significant role. This theory suggests that when employers invest in employees, there is a cycle of reciprocal investment that fosters loyalty and positive motivation (Afsar et al., 2018; Karim &

Nadeem, 2019). Job embeddedness is empirically shown to have a positive relationship with individual and, sequentially, organizational performance. While research tends to focus on the positive outcomes of social exchange theory, Chen and Ayoun (2021) noted that negative interactions might not trigger positive work attitudes and behaviors to establish internal socio-economic harmony. Based on social exchange theory, the benefits of this workplace attitude can be undone through negative perceived organizational support and caustic leadership (Dirican & Erdil, 2020). Research continues to show that social exchange theory impacts withdrawal and turnover intent, key components of job embeddedness, both positively and negatively (Burrows et al., 2022).

Job Embeddedness and Social Identity Theory

Job embeddedness also draws from the social identity theory in that it provides a pathway for the self-enhancement process (Li et al., 2022). The social identity theory postulates that individuals categorize themselves and others into in-groups and out-groups according to key attributes, forming their social identity through association. Based on this theory, individuals seek membership in organizations they admire to improve their self-esteem and define their social identity. In the same context, these individuals seek to distance themselves from organizations that they view as negatively impacting their social identity. This theory provides a lens through which individuals seek membership that enhances their self-esteem while disengaging from those that conflict with their identity. These associations can shape an individual's commitment and attachment to their workplace (Paruzel et al., 2020).

Antecedents of Job Embeddedness

Antecedents of job embeddedness can be divided into employee characteristics and organizational characteristics. Employee characteristics include age, personality, family, and felt obligations significantly influence job embeddedness. Sessa and Bowling (2021) noted that older employees are more likely to have developed stronger links throughout the organization and community contributing to higher levels of embeddedness. Research by Rosen et al. (2018) uniquely utilized an individual's Twitter account to assess the Big Five personality traits of a candidate. This study was able to correctly decipher personality traits of neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extroversion to establish a positive correlation between organizational fit and personality using an individual's social media account. Crossley et al. (2007) noted that the location of family members and their influence on one's daily life should be considered in the global measure of job embeddedness. Family members play a large role with multiple strings of attachment that tether an individual to stability. Burrows et al. (2021) also noted that work-family conflict plays a large factor in the sacrifice calculation in determining turnover intent. Social exchange theory anchors the tethering threads of employee characteristics to formulate a level of obligation towards members of the community and family based on social exchanges.

Organizational characteristics play a pivotal role in job embeddedness. Eveland et al.'s (2018) research noted a fertile bed of loyalty formulated with shared values between an organization, customers, and employees. Perceived congruency of values between an organization and the individual fosters a level of trust while also providing a framework for self-enhancement through social identity theory. Research by Dirican and Erdil

(2020) showed that perceived organizational support was able to moderate the effects of abusive supervision and foster job embeddedness to retain employees. The antecedents of perceived organizational support feed into the characteristics of an organization and strengthen levels of embeddedness.

Perceived Organizational Support

Just as organizations want to know how committed an individual is to their objectives, employees want to know how committed an organization is to them. Eisenberger et al. (1986) introduced the concept of perceived organizational support as a reciprocal construct to answer that question. This self-appraisal framework formulates a comprehensive assessment of an individual's perceived value within an organization. This internal value barometer is based on the individual's perception of the degree the organization cares for their overall well-being and contributions to the organization, encompassing both positive and negative interactions (Caesens et al., 2017; Livingston & Forbes, 2016; Qi et al., 2019; Treglown et al., 2018). These perceptions develop as a result of the employee's anthropomorphic ascription of traits to an institution, allowing them to infer commitment similar to other social relationships. Additionally, individuals tend to attribute actions by leaders as indicative of the organization's stance, influencing their holistic evaluation of value. The interpretation of these perceived traits is enhanced as sincere or malevolent treatment based on treatment through its representatives (Dirican & Erdil, 2020).

The construct of perceived organizational support encapsulates the socioeconomic dynamic between individuals and organizations. It is rooted in the interplay of perceptions of value and commitment that individuals derive from their experiences and

interactions within the organizational context. Research highlights that the strength of perceived obligation is the strongest among cultures where reciprocity is a foundational social norm (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Perceived Organizational Support Theoretical Foundations

The conceptual framework of perceived organizational support anchors its theoretical underpinnings in Blau's (1964) social exchange theory and the organizational support theory. Additionally, this phenomenon has deep ties within the social identity theory providing a framework for the self-enhancement process through affiliations with positive organizations. While these theoretical underpinnings provide anchor points, their conjoined mobilization is crucial to understanding the nature of perceived organizational support (Dirican & Erdil, 2020; Qi et al., 2019; Lyubovnikova et al., 2018).

Perceived Organizational Support and Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory was developed by Blau (1964) and posits that when an individual acts in a beneficial manner towards another individual, it generates a reciprocal obligation. In the context of organizations, where individuals anthropomorphize institutions, this construct provides the theoretical scaffolding for a reciprocal paradigm between the individual and the institution. Notably, Caesens et al. (2017) emphasized that the balance of this paradigm hinges on societal norms regarding exchanges for rewards. Social norms dictate that when an individual perceives support from the organization, they develop an obligatory response to reciprocate with positive actions. Empirical studies reveal that individuals who experience high levels of support develop a sense of obligation to help organizations reach their strategic goals. This

reciprocal response also functions as a mechanism for preserving one's self-image by adhering to positive exchanges, especially in cultures where the norm of reciprocity is deeply ingrained. Research continues to show that the stronger the societal norm of reciprocity, the greater the need to maintain the self-image through a positive exchange (Kinge, 2014; Liang & Li, 2018; Lyubovnikova et al., 2018; Sessa & Bowling, 2021).

Perceived Organizational Support and Social Identity Theory

Perceived organizational support leverages the self-enhancement process as a mechanism through which individuals fulfill socioemotional needs within the workplace. This construct postulates that individuals establish categorizations to define themselves and others within the social paradigm. Subsequently, individuals then tend to identify with and extend support to the groups they perceive as positive to maintain a positive self-evaluation (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Sessa & Bowling, 2021). Eisenberger et al. (1986) noted that the perceived degree of organizational support meets the individual's socioemotional needs for recognition and validation. It would directly correlate to the degree to which individuals integrate their organizational membership into their self-identity. Caesens et al. (2017) and Sessa and Bowling (2021) agreed that the experience of feeling valued and welcomed within the organizational fabric serves as a conduit for individuals to meet their needs of belonging through affiliation. Moreover, the study conducted by Qui et al. (2019) recognized that higher levels of perceived organizational support derived from meaningful relationships directly correlated to higher levels of insulation from burnout and turnover intent. The understanding of the interplay between social identity theory and perceived organizational support supports our comprehension of how individuals are not solely motivated by tangible benefits but are intrinsically

propelled by the prospect of social validation and a positive self-concept within the organizational realm (Sessa & Bowling, 2021).

Antecedents of Perceived Organizational Support

The significance of perceived organizational support within an organization's operational framework is underscored by its association with positive outcomes and ability to buffer against adverse effects. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that when individuals cultivate meaningful relationships that are pivotal to the self-enhancement process, this can insulate against burnout and diminish turnover intentions (Qi et al., 2019). Empirical research has substantiated the correlation between this psychological construct and positive workplace behaviors such as increased organizational commitment, performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. The antecedents that coalesce to shape perceived organizational value offer strategic avenues for intervention that can foster and increase this crucial workplace attitude. These antecedents center around the relationships between the organization and the individual, peer relationships, equitable organizational policies, and personality attributes (Caesens et al., 2017; Eisenberger et al., 1986, Sessa & Bowling, 2021)

Employee Organizational Relationship Quality

Central to perceived organizational support is the caliber of relationships shared between the organization and the individual. This antecedent hinges on the components that convey concern for the employee's well-being. A pivotal facet of this construct is the equitable treatment of employees concerning the decision-making process and the distribution of resources. The litmus test of this antecedent rests on whether the

institution's actions resonate with concern for the employee, or do they reflect sanctioned organizational self-interest (Sessa & Bowling, 2021). Wang and Wang (2020) noted that the major job characteristics associated with burnout centered on job demands and an injustice of resource allocation.

The equitable allocation of resources that aligns with an organization's strategic goals stands as a critical factor for achieving and sustaining organizational success while fostering trust within the workforce (Caesens et al., 2017). The allocation of resources is a tangible exchange between an organization and an employee to accomplish a beneficial task, intricately aligning with the foundations of the social exchange theory. To further explore this antecedent, Hsieh et al. (2019) utilized the conservation of resources theory to discover that when individuals possessed adequate resources, they were able to deal more effectively with work requirements and reduce job stress. Adept resource management invariably translates into diminished burnout and amplified job satisfaction.

The research conducted by Chambers-Baltz et al. (2022) distinctly noted that systemic disparity between resource allocation and demands placed on employees created burnout and turnover. Their study focused on the profession of nurses, the individuals who were asked and felt obligated to perform without the necessary resources felt they were continually teetering on failure to themselves, the organization, and their patients. These habitual feelings created a spiraling effect that resulted in burnout and increased turnover intent. Alavi et al.'s (2022) research found an empirical correlation in the necessity of equitable resource allocation for nurses during post-disaster to aid in their insulation from burnout. McIlroy et al. (2021) further noted that material resources served

as a tangible form of support that met the individual's need for autonomy and created a sense of trust that contributed to increased perceived organizational support.

Aisbett and Hoye's (2014) examination of perceived organizational support for sports event volunteers unveiled a significant facet of the organizational relationship that centered around their ability to participate in decisions regarding their role. This study found that providing the volunteers the power to make decisions was positively correlated to heightened levels of perceived organizational support as volunteers felt their well-being was considered and their contributions were valued. The equitable treatment of individuals within organizational decision-making processes correlated to higher retention rates. Contrarily, when individuals are excluded from the decision-making process coupled with denied resources triggers a sense of devaluation. This exclusion-induced devaluation fosters withdrawal tendencies (Aisbett & Hoye, 2014).

Human Resources Practices, Rewards, and Job Conditions

One of the key tenets of perceived organizational support centers on the relationship between the individual and the coalescing of human resources, rewards, and job conditions. According to Sessa and Bowling (2021), human resources represent growth opportunities for the individual, job security, and flexibility of schedule to assist with work-life balance. The rewards component centers on promotions, salary, and other rewards. The last element discusses favorable job conditions such as safety, autonomy, and variability. Collectively, these antecedents capture the organization's actions to shape an amiable work atmosphere (Sessa & Bowling, 2021).

Aisbett and Hoye's (2014) research concluded that human resources practices and policies that correlate to favorable job conditions and rewards create an increased perception of organizational support. Rewards are an integral part of the social exchange theory and a key antecedent of perceived organizational support. Research suggests that a relationship will dissolve without mutual rewards based on principles associated with microeconomics. In this context, individuals seek to maximize their rewards and minimize costs in a cost-to-benefit analysis. A relationship can only be sustained in an equilibrium or if there are more benefits than costs. If the balance shifts and the relationship creates a debt, the relationship will likely dissolve (Kinge, 2014). Kemp et al.'s (2020) research confirmed that the perception of equitable rewards begets stability. Research by Su et al. (2009) noted that the perception of the linkage between performance and rewards directly correlates to the degree of employee's organizational commitment. The linkage catalyzes extra effort and solidifying increased commitment. In parallel, the findings of Chambers-Baltz et al. (2022) and Aisbett and Hoye (2014) agreed that if salary increases were infeasible then fair distribution of socioemotional resources like recognition, appreciation, job security, training, and autonomy could substantially boost perceived organizational support.

Aisbett and Hoye (2014) underscored the value of favorable and comprehensive human resources policies. This research noted that providing individuals with growth opportunities and addressing the whole person would galvanize employees toward a common goal in alignment with organizational strategy. Moreover, organizations can utilize resource policies to reduce stress and encourage work-life balance subsequently fostering loyalty. The research by Cailler (2018) focused on the implementation of

flexible work schedules within federal agencies. This research postulated that individuals would view these policies as supportive and create a sense of obligation. Cailler (2018) found that alternate work schedules heightened perceived organizational support and decreased turnover. Extending the discourse, Klotz and Boling (2016) found that when human resources invested in employees, there was a sharp reduction in turnover intent. Research has shown that employees will discern and create linkage to the origin of benefits. If human resources practices are initiated within the organization, they have a stronger relationship with perceived organizational support (Sessa & Bowling, 2021).

Behavioral Characteristics

Within the construct of perceived organizational support, the interplay between social dynamics and individual personality traits unfolds as a crucial determinant. One of the key personality traits to consider is core self-evaluation, the reflective assessment of oneself (Sessa & Bowling, 2021). As discerned from Mihalache and Mihalache's (2021) research, individuals with higher self-evaluations have a more positive outlook on the control of their lives and abilities. This trait affects how employees interpret social exchanges and the potential they can derive from situations (Mihalache & Mihalache, 2021).

McIlroy et al.'s (2021) and Sears and Han's (2021) research underscored the profound correlation between conscientiousness and emotional stability with perceived organizational support. Sears and Han's (2021) research proposed that elements of the Big Five personality traits associated with self-regulation would impact the influence of perceived organizational support on job performance. Their research revealed conscientiousness and emotional stability as core components of self-regulation and

underpins task completion and unwavering dedication to work tasks. The nature of conscientiousness extends its influence as a cornerstone of grit, the embodiment of resolution to persevere to completion (Meriac et al., 2023). In a study conducted by Donovan (2022), conscientiousness was confirmed as a critical predictor of job performance and employee engagement. Individuals who possess strong concentrations of these personality traits are more responsive to the social exchange process, a construct that strengthens the linkage between perceived organizational support to commitment and performance. Donovan (2022) further noted that when individuals have low conscientiousness, their organizational commitment and performance are affected. Kim (2017) noted that personality differences could be mediated in the presence of strong ethical leadership. The leadership paradigm demonstrates the efficacy of organizational member exchange.

Organizational Member Exchange

Organizational member exchange intricately weaves the fabric of perceived organizational support within the framework of social exchange theory (Dirican & Erdil, 2020; Sessa & Bowling, 2021). This antecedent hinges on the interaction between the employee and various organizational agents such as peers, subordinates, customers, and leaders. These interactions coalesce to sculpt the anthropomorphic essence of the organization itself.

Peer-to-Peer Exchange

The peer-to-peer exchange surfaces as a potent conduit for fostering perceived organizational support. Alvani et al.'s (2022) research illustrated the critical role of peer

support in mitigating burnout and nurturing well-being among healthcare professionals with secondary traumatic stress. Their research noted that peer camaraderie directly aided recovery from emotionally devastating experiences. Alvani et al. (2022) discovered that peer assistance during traumatic events fostered deeper and stronger bonds, directly increasing well-being. These deepened levels of connectedness catalyzed an increased sense of perceived organizational support that correlated to organizational commitment. Alvani et al. (2022) discovered that the strength of peer-to-peer relationships directly subsequently correlated to embeddedness and decreased withdrawal and turnover intent.

The spectrum of peer-to-peer support also extends to encompass a darker facet that has the potential to erode perceived organizational support and increase withdrawal and turnover intent. Shorey and Wong's (2021) exploratory research explored the negative impact of peer relationships on perceived organizational support. Their research examined bullying between nurses and discovered that these individuals often felt devalued and oppressed as a result of hostile engagements. These actions cast the workplace on an unhealthy trajectory that created secondary effects of decreased employee emotional well-being and decreased patient care. Hostile engagements erode the bedrock of commitment. Individuals who experience the dark side of peer engagements are often isolated and bullied, fostering a toxic work environment. Therefore, these employees shift their focus and seek fulfillment and belonging in other areas (Shorey & Wong, 2021).

Leader-Member Exchange

Amidst intricate organizational dynamics, the leader-member exchange emerges as a formidable force, wielding a profound influence rooted in the construct of supervisor

organizational embodiment or transference, as observed in Costa et al.'s (2022) research. The psychological construct of embodiment suggests that the organization assumes anthropomorphic properties that allow the individual to assign traits and infer levels of commitment. Chambers-Baltz et al. (2022) and Dirican and Erdil (2020) concluded that the supervisor's role in communication between employees and the organization fortifies the embodiment construct. Functioning as organizational representatives and conduits, the supervisors not only relay information but also serve as arbitrators and mediators in navigating organizational policies. This communication gateway is instrumental in the prevention of individuals feeling isolated and withdrawn.

Within this premise, the supervisor grows to embody organizational values. Liang & Li (2018) discovered that a leader's integrity assumes a pivotal role in influencing an employee's level of trust in the organization. Donovan's (2022) study on employee enablement discovered that leaders who practice employee empowerment were also able to inspire a sense of trust and galvanize significant organizational commitment. Positive leader-member exchanges strengthen the anthropomorphic essence of an organization and directly correlate supervisor influence on perceived organizational support, concurrently decreasing turnover intent (Meriac et al., 2023; Smyth & Zimba, 2019).

While existing literature predominantly accentuates the positive impacts of leader-member exchange, McIlroy et al. (2021) takes a detour into the realm of its negative repercussions. Their research assessed the ramifications of unanswered supervisor support on employee well-being, perceived organizational support, and commitment. Unanswered supervisor support (negative leader-member exchange) chips away and erodes employee morale and casts the perception of organizational support in a

negative light, consequently perpetuating turnover intent. Costa et al.'s (2022) research revealed that unethical leadership inspired antithetical organizational identification and performance, reinforcing the influence of supervisor embodiment. Klotz and Bolino (2016) illuminated the darker side of leader toxicity as despondent leadership has the ability to permeate the organizational fabric. Caustic engagements tend to create internal justice imbalances within the workforce. According to social exchange theory, actions have a reciprocal component. Research by Chen and Ayoun (2021) confirmed that negative interactions incur justice debts that must be resolved to restore internal balance. These restorations may manifest themselves in the form of social loafing, theft, social undermining, or be expressed during resignation letters (Klotz & Bolino, 2016).

Resounding across the spectrum of research is the emphasis that individuals who perceive high levels of organizational support coupled with healthy leader-member exchanges have decreased withdrawal and turnover intent (Donovan, C. 2022; Smyth & Zimba, 2019). Research conducted by McIlroy et al. (2021) research corroborated the concept that quality leader-member exchange had the ability to insulate organizations from counterproductive work behavior while simultaneously safeguarding employees from exhaustion, burnout, and withdrawal.

Leadership

In the intricate landscape of organizational dynamics, leadership emerges as a coveted attribute in society. Organizations view this commodity as the critical component for orchestrating collective efforts toward strategic goals. Distinct from management, this attribute rises above following predesignated steps. Leadership understands the strategic vision to marshal resources toward the goal. Leaders have the foresight to anticipate

obstacles and the adaptability to chart new directions. Kort (2008) assessed that from 1920 to 1999, leadership has been defined in 221 different ways. Although there are different definitions, they all share a congruent message that leadership entails a person leveraging power to motivate or influence others to do something.

The two primary components of the power dynamic are personal and positional power. Positional power is derived from formal hierarchies and is encapsulated in the office or rank that is greater than the followers. Personal power centers on the perception of the leader by followers as likable and knowledgeable while enhanced through the social dynamic (Northouse, 2019). Formal leaders can leverage both positional and personal domains, while informal or emergent leaders can only draw from personal power.

There is no single formula for leadership, rather it remains a complex, multifaceted calculus derived from the manipulation of multiple variables. Spector (2017) depicted this inspirational and motivational power as an aggregate of traits, skills, and behaviors. There are disagreements about what concentration of these variables creates the best formula. Despite countless authors writing thousands of books to provide principles that transform the average individual into a great leader, Green and Gini (2014) distilled the essence into three cardinal characteristics: character, stewardship, and experience. The core principles of character and stewardship speak to an ethical foundation, a key component of quality leader-member exchange.

Ethical Leadership

Ethics are a cornerstone of leadership, as evidenced by Reiley and Jacobs (2016). Their research concluded that a follower's perception of their leader's ethical foundation influenced the dynamics of their coercive power. Many researchers have noted that power and influence often have corruptive properties. Regardless of the potential correlation to toxic leadership, the construct of power must be recognized for its moral neutrality. In the context of leadership, power is the conduit for influencing change, opinions, values, behaviors, and attitudes. Leadership is characterized as the ability to galvanize others toward a shared goal. The motivation behind that charge and goal often determines the ethical interpretation. Within this domain, leaders exercise five domains of power: legitimate (positional), reward (incentive-driven), coercive (discipline-based), expert (knowledge), and referent (admiration). Riley and Jacobs (2016) found that when leadership was viewed as being ethical, their referent, expert, and reward power was more influential on employee behavior.

Ethical Leadership Influence on Team Performance.

As leaders motivate others towards a unified goal, the integration of interdependent individuals into a cohesive team is critical. These individuals must learn to finesse aspects of coordination, collaboration, and cooperation in different concentrations to formulate performance. A high-performing team is not characterized as a collection of siloed determination but as an integration of complementary efforts whereby the whole transcends the sum of its parts (Porck et al., 2018). Although diversity has been touted as a fundamental part of team performance, Kim (2017) noted a paradox within South Korean team dynamics. Contrary to conventional wisdom, this study

discovered that diversity hindered creativity and degraded organizational performance. Despite this paradox, leadership emerges as the prime catalyst for unification, steering the team dynamic toward entropy or integration, an insight collaborated by Graupensperger et al. (2021).

Kim's (2017) collaborative research found that ethical leadership has the potential to overshadow the negative effects of team diversity and personality differences and create unity. Individual or organizational ethical foundations act as bedrock unifiers across multiple planes to support integration for strategic goals. This construct was empirically tested by Srivastava and Pinto (2022), who found that ethical leadership had the ability to influence team evolution. This research concluded that ethical leaders could usher a team along a trajectory of integration instead of disintegration through honest and fair behavior. Ethical leadership is strongly associated with the transformational leadership style (Northouse, 2019; Yuki et al., 2013).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership theory stands as the pinnacle of ethical leadership styles. This style leads, motivates, and influences others to achieve noble goals through ethical inspiration (Spector, 2017; Srivastava & Pinto, 2022). Transformational leadership leverages a value-based connection to create influence and motivation to ultimately raise the follower and leader's morality. A hallmark trait of this type of leader is the attentiveness to the ethics, values, and long-term goals of followers to influence them on a personal level. Transformational leaders rise above their own interests and leverage insights to help followers reach their fullest potential personally, morally, and professionally (Northouse, 2019). Transformational leadership is an active process that

elevates leaders and followers towards a higher moral plane through five key characteristics.

Transformational Leadership Traits

Transformational leaders interact with organizational culture to help guide and shape the ethical undercurrent toward a moral vision. Northouse's (2019) and Srivastava and Pinto's (2022) research found that transformational leadership leverages five fundamental traits to inspire cultural change. The first trait is that of embodiment; this leader is a role model for the values, ethics, and beliefs they want from their followers. The second trait centers around competency; this leader understands the strategic vision and leads others, thereby encouraging and growing followers into leaders. Another characteristic is the ability to weave moral overtones into strategic goals. A transformational leader must be able to clearly communicate higher expectations. The fifth characteristic is the ability of the leader to ground all decisions to a moral foundation and tie actions to a higher purpose (Northouse, 2019; Srivastava & Pinto, 2022). The hallmark of a transformational leader is their efforts to inspire followers to transcend self-interest for idealized goals towards a greater cause.

Special Operations

Within the military landscape, the term “Special Operations Forces” (SOF) stands as an emblem of excellence, signifying the pinnacle of skill, courage, and expertise. These elite units exist within each branch of the military: Army (Special Forces and Rangers); Navy (SEAL Teams and Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman); Marine Corps (Marine Special Operations Command); and Air Force (Pararescue, Combat

Controllers, and Special Operations Squadrons) (Frueh et al., 2020; Kiras, 2019). The hierarchy of each SOF component begins with a division of operational design.

Individuals are assigned as either enabler or operational-centric.

Common to all SOF units regardless of the branch of service, is an arduous selection process and training pipeline. Selection and training differ by military branch, but all are extremely competitive and hallmarked by low completion rates (5% - 15%) (Frueh et al., 2020). The Special Operations qualification pathway is mentally and physically challenging, designed to replicate intense situations that mirror the unique demands of their roles. This unique training was crafted to select individuals with the capacity for success in ambiguous and arduous situations while fostering a team mentality (Kiras, 2019).

Upon completion, these service members are expected to integrate into their unit's mission cycle, a work environment heavily laden with training and deployments. As the United States only Global Combatant Command, U.S. Special Operations Command forces (USSOF) these individuals are often called upon as a low-density high-value asset for a multitude of operations. Deployments are often dangerous and in high-pressure zones, where their actions bear strategic consequences for the United States (Kiras, 2019). During these deployments, U.S. SOF undertake challenging tasks that require individuals to perform at near maximal physical and psychological capacity for extended periods (Royer et al., 2018). This operationally centric culture forms deepened levels of trust that translates into high levels of esprit de corps and lifelong brotherhood unlike other units (Russell et al., 2016). This unique brotherhood heralds to their units first and then more deeply to their teams creating a unique perspective of peer support.

This operationally driven culture comes at a recognized cost, a toll that Frueh et al.'s (2020) research coined the "Operator Syndrome". This research encapsulates the profound damage to a mature operator's quality of life and health, well-acknowledged within the community. This cost gives rise to a closed society of insiders and outsiders, based on experiences, reliability, and ethical judgments in arduous times. Despite the hardships, these units have individuals who fight to remain even when injured and often select to remain within the community even after they retire. The environment of exceptional stress and dedication creates the desire and need for unique leadership skills and comradery that insulates against burnout and withdrawal through embeddedness while galvanizing commitment despite the heavy cost.

Biblical Foundations of the Study

When examining the effects of ethical leadership and comradery on job embeddedness inside high-stress occupations, Scripture provides unique insight through the relationship between Jesus Christ and His disciples. Examining this phenomenon from a Christian worldview, a deeper insight emerges that is rooted in Adam's original sin in the Garden of Eden. This simple action had complex ramifications that cast all of creation on a trajectory of mutiny away from God and continues to resonate today (Wolters, 2005). Scripture recounts the impact of this sin with God's words to Adam, "cursed is the ground for thy sake", and then explains that "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Genesis 3: 17-20). The result of this sin ripples through our lives today, generating a void only God can fill.

Paul addresses our resonating brokenness and openly declares the redemptive pathway through Jesus Christ in his letter to the church in Rome, "the whole of creation

groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Romans 8:22). The Grand Narrative tells us that Jesus Christ holds the redemptive path and is the answer to our broken relationship with God (Wolters, 2005). When examining the construct of leadership, we must examine Jesus Christ. History records that there has never been a more impactful leader, and Scripture declares there will never be a more transcendent leader than Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ stands as the archetype of ethical leadership. His disciples came from diverse social backgrounds and found unity through Jesus Christ, a unity that inspires others even today. Ethical leaders must possess visionary guidance, role modeling, and aligning actions with profound purpose (Northouse, 2019; Srivastava & Pinto, 2022).

Examining the days preceding the crucifixion, we see that Christ's actions embody the tenets of ethical leadership. Matthew records that Christ began to prepare His disciples. Unwavering in His resolve, Jesus explained He had to go to Jerusalem to suffer at the hands of the elders and chief priests, to be killed and then be "raised again the third day" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Matthew 16:21). Jesus knew the vision and clearly articulated it to His followers. When Peter heard this, he pleaded that this shouldn't happen. Jesus rebuked him and explained that this was for a higher purpose, "thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of man" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Matthew 16:22). Luke records this situation and describes Jesus as, "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Luke 9:51).

As we examine Jesus's actions in the hours prior to His crucifixion, we see tremendous congruence with the tenants of transformational leadership. Jesus clearly

articulates His expectations from His followers. Matthew records that after Peter's reproof, Jesus then turned to His disciples and said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Matthew 16:24-25). In these two verses, Jesus calls His disciples to a higher purpose and to lead by example. He doesn't hesitate to explain that the road will not be easy, and that each follower will have an individual cross that must be taken up daily. The cross represented an agonizing and relentless struggle until death. These verses also tell us that our crosses will not be something that is thrust upon us, but, like Christ, we will actively pick up and choose to endure. Christ further explains that to save our lives, we must die to ourselves so that the resurrection can occur. This is transformational leadership. He called His followers to a higher standard, cast a vision for them, outlined a path, and then inspired them through an example (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Matthew 16; Spector, 2017).

Research shows that an ethical leader must be a strong role model that creates motivation through actions that are for a higher purpose (Northouse, 2019). Jesus embodied this when He chose to sacrifice Himself on the cross for our redemption. In His death, He showed us what it means to die to self. John's Gospel records the event in detail and states that Jesus did not struggle but stated: "it is finished: and bowed His head, and gave up the Ghost" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, John 19:30). Jesus knew the vision and the path, He had to get past the crucifixion to get to the resurrection that would redeem us from our broken union. John further recounts that when the Roman soldiers came to break the legs of those on the cross to hasten their deaths that Jesus had already

died. He describes the scene, "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (King James Version, 1796/2012, John 19:34). In the Bible, the blood often symbolizes cleanliness and redemption, water symbolizes the refreshing of the Word. Jesus provided an example of what dying to self should look like. When we are pierced, our reaction should be forgiveness and the Word.

Scripture details the impact of Jesus's sacrifice on the embeddedness of His followers, as many are recorded as going willingly to their deaths for proclaiming the Gospel. Of the Apostles, only John is said to have not died a gruesome death. History records followers throughout the centuries as working diligently and at great cost to spread the Gospel. We can infer from these examples that Christ's followers endured hardships and a stress-hardened work environment that would normally lead to burnout and withdrawal; however, history records steadfastness.

Summary

The global phenomenon known as the Great Resignation continues to reverberate across the workforce as people still search for meaningfulness (Todorova et al., 2021). As employees resign, the remaining workforce shoulders increased responsibilities, creating an environment conducive to burnout and withdrawal. These circumstances reinforced the fundamental SOF truths that humans are more important than hardware and quality people cannot be mass-produced in a time of crisis (Kiras, 2019). For any organization, retention and recruitment of quality human capital are the lifeblood. The concept of job embeddedness emerges as a strategy to counter withdrawal and turnover (Mitchell et al. (2001). Dirican and Erdil (2020) establish a strong correlation between heightened levels of perceived organizational support and job embeddedness. Of the antecedents for

perceived organizational support, Costa et al.'s (2022) research highlighted quality leader-member exchange as having the most significant impact through the psychological construct of transference, whereby leaders embody the values of an organization. Research shows that ethical leadership styles foster higher levels of quality leader-member exchange, with transformational leadership being one of the more significant (Northouse, 2019; Yuki et al., 2013). When examining the influences of supervisor support and peer support on retention beyond COVID-19 in a high-stress occupation through a Biblical worldview, we find strong similarities between this construct and the impact Christ's leadership style has on His followers. This study was chosen inside of Special Operations because it is an understudied occupational sub-culture that has deepened esprit de corps developed and hardened in arduous times. This closed-off society that prides itself on brotherhood is ideal for studying the effects of perceived supervisor support and peer support on job-embeddedness and turnover intent.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Overview

Understanding the profound significance of perceived peer and perceived supervisor support in shaping the relationship between job embeddedness and turnover intent in Special Operations is paramount. As individuals increasingly seek profound purpose in their lives and the inclination to disengage from work persists, it becomes imperative for Special Operations to maintain its state of readiness as a Global Combatant Command ready to deploy with little to no notice. Individuals volunteer and participate in multiple selection criteria and extensive training prior to admittance. The investment of time and resources to create members of these elite units makes them invaluable and difficult to replace, especially in a time of crisis. Understanding fundamental mechanisms that shield against withdrawal and turnover is a strategic necessity for leaders to ensure operational readiness. The purpose of this study was to quantitatively analyze the relationship among perceived peer support and perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness and turnover intent in Special Operations post-pandemic.

Study participants were recruited from units within Special Operations to complete an online anonymous survey. Participants spent approximately less than five minutes completing the survey to include demographic questions, a 7-item coworker support scale (De Clercq et al., 2020), a 9-item Index of Supervisor Support (Ko et al., 2015), a 7-item scale for Job Embeddedness (Crossley et al., 2007), and 3-item scale for Turnover Intent (Cohen, 1999). The independent variables were perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support. The dependent variables were job embeddedness and

turnover intent. These variables were assessed using a Pearson correlation analysis assess the correlation between the variables and a multiple regression analysis was utilized to assess the extent of the independent variables' correlation to each dependent variable. This study allowed for a comparison of the strength of each independent variable within Special Operations. Shedding light on the interplay of these components can equip leadership with informed strategies to effectively counter withdrawal and enhance operational resiliency.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between perceived peer support and job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

RQ3: Will perceived peer support or perceived supervisor support have a stronger relationship, if any, to job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between perceived peer support and turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

RQ6: Will perceived peer support or perceived supervisor support have a stronger relationship, if any to turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Perceived supervisor support will be significantly related to job embeddedness within Special Operation Forces.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived peer support will be significantly related with job embeddedness within Special Operation Forces.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant mean difference between perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support's relationship on job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces.

Hypothesis 4: Perceived supervisor support is significantly related to turnover intent within Special Operation Forces.

Hypothesis 5: Perceived peer support is significantly related to turnover intent within Special Operation Forces.

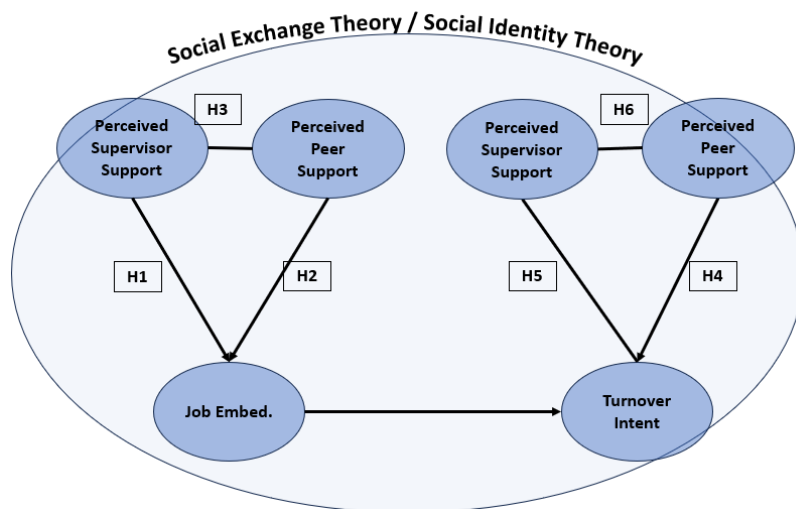
Hypothesis 6: There will be a mean difference between perceived supervisor support and perceived supervisor support's relationship on turnover intent in Special Operation Forces.

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to quantitatively analyze the correlational relationships among perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support with job embeddedness and turnover intent within Special Operations. A correlational study was chosen based on the theoretical foundation that linked the constructs. Data was chosen to be collected through a survey constructed of reliable and valid psychological tests that were designed to effectively measure each variable. This method of data collection allows for a quantitative analysis to support correlation.

Perceived supervisor support is a metric used to measure quality leader-member exchange, one of the strongest antecedents of perceived organizational support. This strength is directly linked through an ethical foundation. Ethical leadership leverages value-based connections to create influence and motivation to ultimately raise the follower and leader's morality (Northouse, 2019). Perceived supervisor support that elevates the workforce towards a higher moral plane subsequently establishes a cornerstone for meaningfulness in the workplace, an integral buffer against one of the pivotal triggers of the Great Resignation (Spector, 2017; Srivastava & Pinto, 2022). Research by Dechawantanapaisal (2022) assessed the association between peer support and on-the-job fit by correlating organizational compatibility with the matching of skills, abilities, progression, and fit regarding values and ethics (Burrows et al., 2022; Nolan et al., 2016). This distinct relationship leverages effort for a higher purpose and the fostering of a sense of belonging. This also feeds the self-enhancement process and increases self-image through shared values creating deeper relationships and loyalty (Eveland et al., 2018).

This research design fulfilled the purpose of this study and effectively empowers organizational leaders with the tools necessary to understand the impact of leader-member exchange and peer-peer exchange on the relationship between job embeddedness and turnover intent. The hypotheses from the preceding section are illustrated within the theoretical framework in Figure 2.

Figure 2*Hypothesis Integration Into Theoretical Framework***Participants**

The cross-sectional dataset was collected by purposeful sampling to effectively target a specific populace. The requirement for participating in this study were that individuals currently be a member of an assigned unit within the U.S. Special Operations Command in either an operational capacity or as an enabler. The exclusion criterion included membership for less than one year. Permission to conduct the study was sought from each unit's Command team. Additionally, to ensure compliance with operational security, strict adherence to the guidelines stipulated by the Command's Public Affairs Office to safeguard sensitive operational information was followed. Additional authorization beyond the aforementioned Command permission was not requisite for participant recruitment.

The recruitment process was initiated through each unit's administrative office via email (Appendix B – Recruitment Email). Participants were asked to complete an

anonymous online survey (Appendix C – Proposed Survey). No additional permissions were required to recruit participants. The participation sample size for a Pearson analysis was determined using power analysis for a medium effect size ($\rho = 0.09$). This study was structured to have a minimum power of 0.80 with an alpha of 0.05, which required 101 participants. An additional 20% of participants were collected to allow for attrition. A Priori Power Analysis is noted in Appendix A.

Study Procedures

Upon approval by Liberty's Institutional Review Board, participants were recruited through professional networks sponsored by the administrative offices within USSOCOM assigned units. The foremost component of the survey consisted of obtaining informed consent (Appendix E). This foundational component ensured that all prospective participants were informed of their unimpeded right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time. This form also ensured the individual understood the potential risks associated with an online survey. The document explained the primary purpose of the study and collection methods, as well as ensured the protection of the confidentiality of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants were drawn from multiple military occupational skills, ages, and genders; this information was also captured in the survey. The questionnaire format is represented in Appendix E: Questionnaire Template. The questionnaire link was distributed via the unit's administrative office and stored on Qualtrics®. The survey was available to all participants for two weeks to allow for an adequate collection of participants. The responses were then downloaded and synthesized using IBM SPSS® Statistics for Windows (IBM Corp., Armonk, N.Y., USA).

Instrumentation and Measurement

Independent Variables

Perceived Peer Support

Perceived coworker support is an evaluative construct that assesses the socio-emotional support coming from peers. This construct is one of the critical antecedents of perceived organizational support and captures the peer-to-peer exchange (Miller et al., 2017; Sessa & Bowling, 2021). This variable was assessed using a subsection of De Clercq et al.'s (2020) survey for Mediators and Moderators of Coworker Support and Employee Turnover Intentions. Using the coworker support subsection to measure perceived peer support is acceptable based on Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$ for this particular subsection's ability to measure perceived coworker support. Additionally, De Clercq et al.'s (2020) subscale is an application of the scale developed by Ladd and Henry (2000) to assess an employee's perceived support from coworkers. The scale developed by Ladd and Henry (2000) was adapted from Eisenberger's (1986) original perceived organizational support. Eisenberger's scale had a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$, making it highly reliable and providing a solid foundation for subsequent scales.

Perceived Supervisor Support

Supervisor support is a critical antecedent of perceived organizational support. This construct reflects an employee's evaluation of a supervisor's appreciation for their contributions and overall care for their well-being. Because supervisors act as agents of an organization, directing resources and performance of employees, the interpretation of their actions is viewed as a key indicator of the organization's support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Ko et al. (2015) developed this 9-item scale with Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$, indicating high reliability. This aspect of the overall survey provides the bridge to correlate leadership to job embeddedness through perceived organizational support.

Dependent Variables

Job Embeddedness

Job embeddedness is an anti-withdrawal construct that is both theory and a model for retention. This workplace attitude is the amalgamation of on-the-job and off-the-job factors that create a sacrifice analysis for leaving (Mitchell et al., 2001; Sessa & Bowling, 2021). This construct was measured using Crossley et al.'s (2007) Global Job Embeddedness scale, a 7-item Likert-scaled survey with high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$). Higher scores indicate a greater sense of job embeddedness.

Turnover Intent

Turnover intent measures the employee's intention to quit. This construct was measured using a modified Turnover Intention Scale that captures turnover intent with regard to an organization (Cohen, 1999). This 3-item scale measures an employee's intention to leave his or her work organization. The test was proven to have high reliability with Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$ for intent to leave an organization.

Operationalization of Variables

Perceived Peer Support (Independent Variable) – This is an ordinal variable and was measured using a 7-item subsection titled coworker support, originally developed by Ladd and Henry (2000) and incorporated by De Clercq et al. (2020). The scale represents the perceived support from coworkers.

Perceived Supervisor Support (Independent Variable) - This is an ordinal variable and measured using a 9-item Index of Supervisor Support from Ko et al.'s (2015). This scale represents the employee's perceived support from their supervisor.

Job Embeddedness (Dependent Variable) – This is an ordinal variable measured with a 7-item scale (Crossley et al., 2007). This scale captured only the impact of on-the-job tethering.

Turnover Intent (Dependent Variable) – This is an ordinal variable measured with a 3-item scale (Cohen, 1999). This scale measures the employee's intent to quit.

Data Analysis

The dependent variables of job embeddedness and turnover intent were assessed for correlation against the ordinate independent variables of perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support. A Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess the correlation between the variables and a multiple regression analysis to assess the extent of the independent variables' correlation to each dependent variable.

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations

The delimitations of this study were that all participants were members of Special Operations. This boundary ensures that all participants underwent multiple voluntary processes for admittance. The Special Operations' culture is heavily laden with an acculturation that is hallmarked by sacrifice, commitment to mission, and effort above and beyond the normal call to duty. Because of this, participants are able to express intent to leave and withdraw at any time. Additionally, participants were required to have one year of SOF experience. This might have limited participation but ensured that individuals were assimilated into the Special Operations culture and able to gather a perception of peer and supervisor support. These boundaries may limit our understanding of the effects of supervisor support and peer support outside this unique culture and hierarchal structure.

One of the fundamental assumptions in this research proposal is the unique influence of peer support due to the large emphasis on tactical-level teams. Special Operations is unlike other military units in that the primary effort centers around the efforts of operational teams. Operational teams are expected to operate autonomously with vague guidance for flexibility to make strategic impacts.

One of the key limitations of this study centers around self-reporting and the potential for common method variance. Another limitation is that this paper only covers organizations with positive reputations and does not cover organizations with negative reputations and positive peer and supervisor support. A third limitation centers around a cross sectional study that may not capture developing attitudes and may be more influenced by recent events.

Summary

This research enhanced comprehension of the impact of supervisor and peer support on job embeddedness and turnover intent inside Special Operations. The targeted population for this study were individuals serving within Special Operations with a minimum of one year's experience. These population parameters ensured participants possess requisite exposure and cultural immersion to be able to assess the influence of supervisor and peer support regarding job embeddedness and turnover intent.

Prior to initiating this study, the necessary permissions were sought from Liberty's Institutional Review Board and the Special Operations unit's Command team. Once approval had been secured, data collection was carried out through an online anonymous survey, which were distributed via the unit's administrative channels. Data analysis was conducted through a Pearson correlation analysis to assess the correlation between the variables and a multiple regression analysis to assess the extent of the independent variables' correlation to each dependent variable. This unique research initiative bears the potential to provide valuable insights into the moderating effects of supervisor and peer support on job embeddedness and turnover intent within Special Operations. By focusing on this specific population, this study can provide commanders with the knowledge necessary to retain quality individuals and maintain operational readiness.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

Understanding the profound significance of perceived peer and perceived supervisor support in shaping the relationship between job embeddedness and turnover intent in Special Operations is paramount. As individuals increasingly seek sincere purpose in their lives and the inclination to disengage from work persists, it becomes imperative for Special Operations to maintain its state of readiness as a Global Combatant Command ready to deploy with little to no notice. Individuals volunteer and participate in multiple selection criteria and extensive training prior to admittance. The investment of time and resources to create members of these elite units makes them invaluable and difficult to replace, especially in a time of crisis. Understanding fundamental mechanisms that shield against withdrawal and turnover is a strategic necessity for leaders to ensure operational readiness. The purpose of this study was to quantitatively analyze the correlational relationships of perceived peer support and perceived supervisor support with job embeddedness and turnover intent in post-pandemic U.S. Special Operations.

Study participants were recruited from units within Special Operations to complete an online anonymous survey. Participants spent approximately less than five minutes completing the survey to include demographic questions, a 7-item coworker support scale (De Clercq et al., 2020), a 9-item Index of Supervisor Support (Ko et al., 2015), a 7-item scale for Job Embeddedness (Crossley et al., 2007), and 3-item scale for Turnover Intent (Cohen, 1999). The independent variables were perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support. The dependent variables were job embeddedness and

turnover intent. These variables were assessed using a Pearson correlation analysis to assess the correlation between the variables and a multiple regression analysis was utilized to assess the extent of the independent variables' correlation to each dependent variable. This study allowed for a comparison of the strength of each independent variable within Special Operations. Shedding light on the interplay of these components can equip leadership with informed strategies to effectively counter withdrawal and enhance operational resiliency.

Research Questions

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between perceived peer support and job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

RQ3: Will perceived peer support or perceived supervisor support have a stronger relationship, if any, to job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between perceived peer support and turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

RQ6: Will perceived peer support or perceived supervisor support have a stronger relationship, if any to turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

Descriptive Results

Over a period of two weeks, more than 300 Special Operations participants were invited by their respective unit administrative offices to participate in an anonymous online survey through a reusable link. These recruitment efforts resulted in a 50% response rate, that yielded 140 usable responses. Inclusionary criteria for participants included being over 18 years old and membership in a unit that is subordinate to U.S. Special Operations Command.

To conduct this study, relevant online psychological surveys were administered based on their reliability and validity using Cronbach's alpha. This study was administered through an anonymous link provided by Qualtrics. The participation sample size for a Pearson analysis was determined using power analysis for a medium effect size ($\rho = 0.09$). This study was structured to have a minimum power of 0.80 with an alpha of 0.05, which required 101 participants (see Appendix A). Key Demographic information was collected from these 101 participants to provide an overall picture of Special Operations' formation. Data was synthesized using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, the most commonly used correlation coefficient (Martin & Bridgmon, 2012). This analysis is also used to generate bivariate correlations and is the basic statistic in the multiple regression analysis (MRAs) in this study. To assess relationship strength of multiple independent variables, a multiple regression analysis (MRA) was conducted.

Demographics

Age

Participants were categorized into three separate age divisions to cover a full career of military service. Age demographics revealed 14 (13.9%) applicants between 18-29 years of age, 42 (41.6%) participants between 30-39 years of age, and 45 (44.6%) participants above 40 years of age. The greatest concentration of applicants were above 40 years of age. This is likely due to Special Operation's selection criteria targeting individuals who have already served in previous units making them more mature in age.

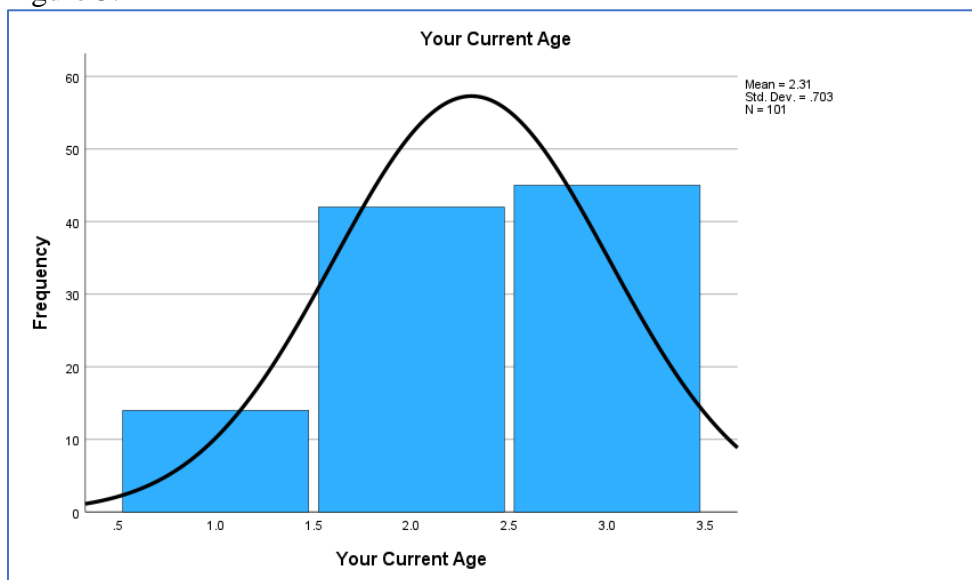
The statistical data for age is captured in Table 1 and Figure 3.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistical Data -Age

Age	<i>n</i>	%
18-29 years	14	13.9
30-39 years	42	41.6
> 40 years	45	44.6
Total	101	100

Figure 3.



Gender

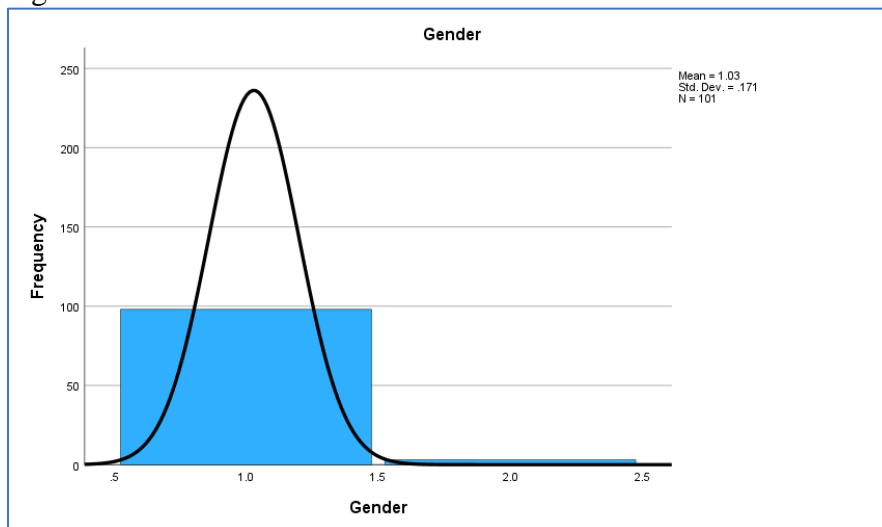
Sample survey revealed 101 participants, 98 (97%) males and 3 (3%) females.

The statistical data for gender is captured in Table 2 and displayed in Figure 4.

Table 2.
Descriptive Statistical Data -Gender

Gender	<i>n</i>	%
Male	98	97
Female	3	3
Total	101	100

Figure 4.



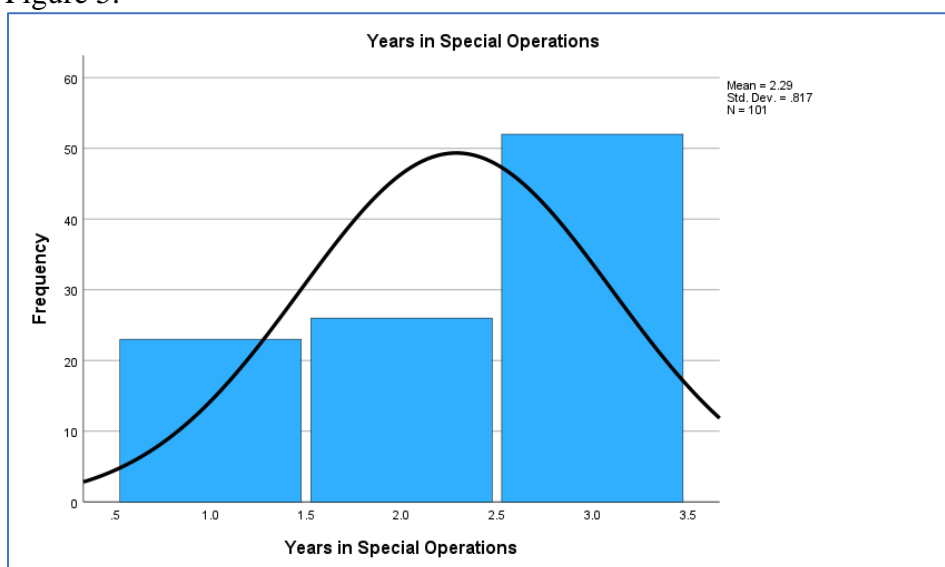
Years of Special Operations Experience

Applicants were then categorized based on their years of Special Operations experience. Statistical data revealed 23 (22.8%) participants had 1-5 years, 26 (25.7%) participants had 6-10 years, and 52 (51.5%) participants had more than 10 years of experience. These categories were designed to capture the early, mid, and senior level experiences of an individual within Special Operations. The statistical data for years in Special Operations is captured in Table 3 and displayed in Figure 5.

Table 3.
Descriptive Statistical Data -Years in Special Operations

Years in Special Operations	<i>n</i>	%
1-5 years	23	22.8
6-10 years	26	25.7
> 10 years	52	51.5
Total	101	100

Figure 5.



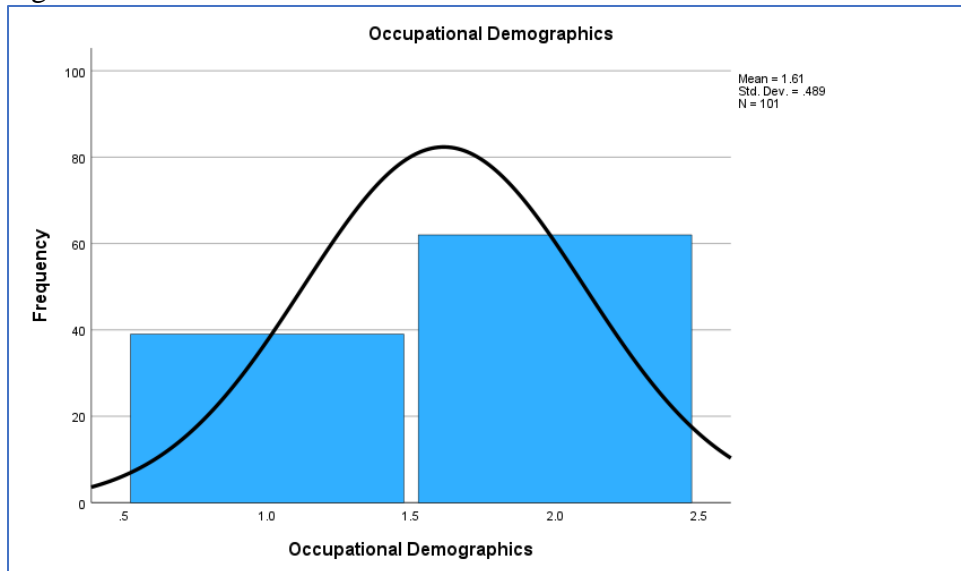
Occupation

Special Operations is an operationally focused community with components being classified as either Enabler or Operator. Statistical data of the 101 participants revealed 39 (38.6%) Enablers and 62 (61.4%) Operators participated in the study. Occupational statistical data is recorded in Table 4 and displayed in Figure 6.

Table 4.
Descriptive Statistical Data – Occupation

Occupation	<i>n</i>	%
Enabler	39	38.6
Operator	62	61.4
Total	101	100

Figure 6.

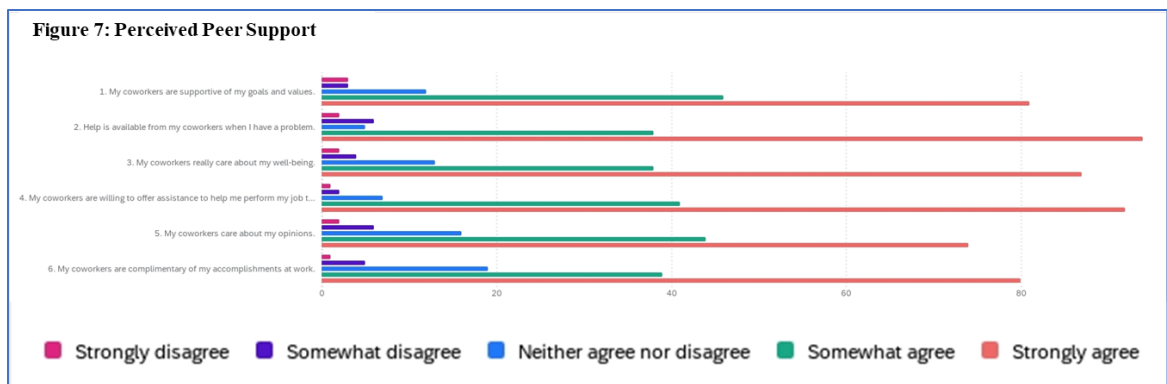


Perceived Peer Support

This is an ordinal variable and was measured using a 7-item subsection titled coworker support, originally developed by Ladd and Henry (2000) and incorporated by De Clercq et al. (2020). The scale represents the perceived support from coworkers. Data from the 101 participants' perception of peer support survey is captured in Table 5 and displayed in Figure 7. This data reveals increased levels of perceived peer support.

Table 5.
Perceived Peer Support Survey

Survey Question	Min	Max	Mean	Standard. Deviation
My coworkers are supportive of my goals and values.	2	5	4.47	..674
Help is available from my coworkers when I have a problem.	1	5	4.50	.832
My coworkers really care about my well-being.	2	5	4.49	.770
My coworkers are willing to offer assistance to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.	2	5	4.56	.671
My coworkers care about my opinions.	2	5	4.32	.794
My coworkers are complimentary of my accomplishments at work.	2	5	4.39	.790
Even if I did the best job possible, my coworkers would fail to notice (reverse coded).	1	5	4.19	1.111

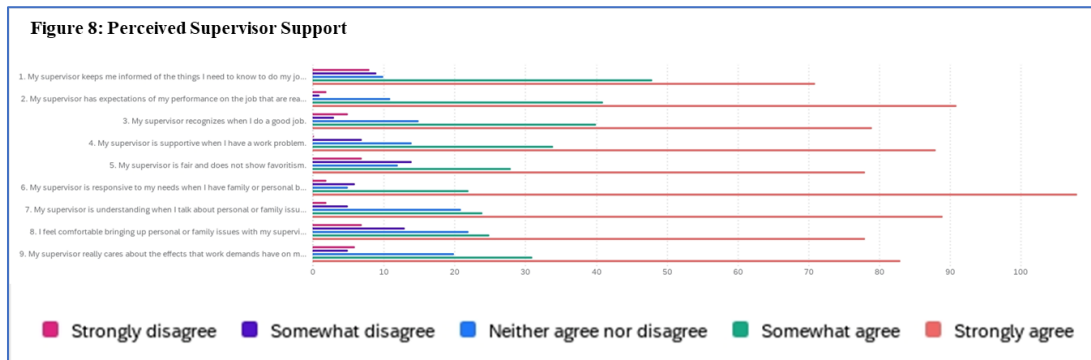


Perceived Supervisor Support

This is an ordinal variable and measured using a 9-item Index of Supervisor Support (Ko et al. 2015). This scale represents the employee's perceived support from their supervisor. Data from the 101 participants' perception of supervisor support survey is captured in Table 6 and displayed in Figure 8. This data reveals increased levels of perceived supervisor support.

Table 6.
Perceived Supervisor Support Survey

Survey Question	Min	Max	Mean	Standard. Deviation
My supervisor keeps me informed of the things I need to know to do my job well.	1	5	4.17	1.040
My supervisor has expectations of my performance on the job that are realistic.	3	5	4.53	.626
My supervisor recognizes when I do a good job.	1	5	4.37	.812
My supervisor is supportive when I have a work problem.	2	5	4.45	.796
My supervisor is fair and does not show favoritism.	1	5	4.22	1.051
My supervisor is responsive to my needs when I have family or personal business to take care of.	1	5	4.64	.759
My supervisor is understanding when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work.	1	5	4.37	.928
I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor.	1	5	4.06	1.165
My supervisor really cares about the effects that work demands have on my personal and family life.	1	5	4.30	.965



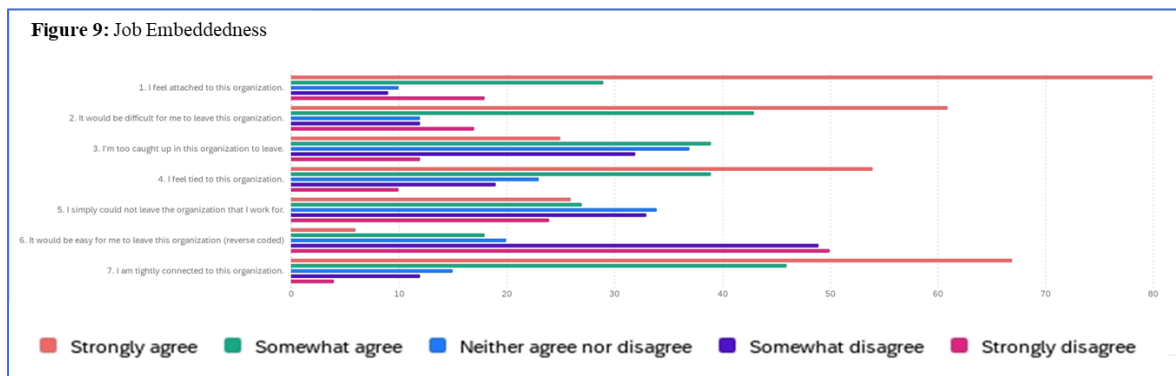
Job Embeddedness

This is an ordinal variable measured with a 7-item scale (Crossley et al., 2007).

This scale captured only the impact of on-the-job tethering. Data from the 101 participants' job embeddedness is captured in Table 7 and Figure 9. This data reveals an increased level of job embeddedness.

Table 7.
Job Embeddedness Survey

Survey Question	Min	Max	Mean	Standard. Deviation
I feel attached to this organization.	1	5	3.99	1.338
It would be difficult for me to leave this organization.	1	5	3.78	1.301
I'm too caught up in this organization to leave.	1	5	3.21	1.169
I feel tied to this organization..	1	5	3.82	1.178
I simply could not leave the organization that I work for.	1	5	2.90	1.300
I am tightly connected to this organization.	1	5	4.06	1.047
It would be easy for me to leave this organization (reverse coded)	1	5	3.89	1.067

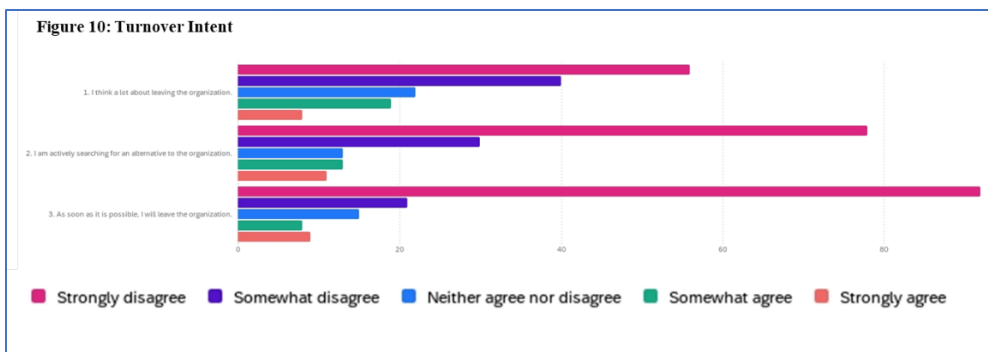


Turnover Intent

This is an ordinal variable measured with a 3-item scale (Cohen, 1999). This scale measures the employee's intent to quit, the greater the number the less likely individuals are to quit. Data from the 101 Turnover Intent Survey is captured in Table 8 and Figure 10, revealing a low level of turnover intent.

Table 8
Turnover Intent Survey

Survey Question	Min	Max	Mean	Standard. Deviation
I think a lot about leaving the organization.	1	5	3.74	1.246
I am actively searching for an alternative to the organization.	1	5	4.01	1.292
As soon as it is possible, I will leave the organization.	1	5	4.19	1.247



Study Findings

This research was guided by six primary research questions that sought to explore the relationships between perceived supervisor support, perceived peer support, job embeddedness, and turnover intent inside the Special Operations community post COVID-19. This unique and understudied workforce has largely been insulated from turnover intent despite the effects of the Great Resignation.

Correlation Between Perceived Supervisor Support and Job Embeddedness

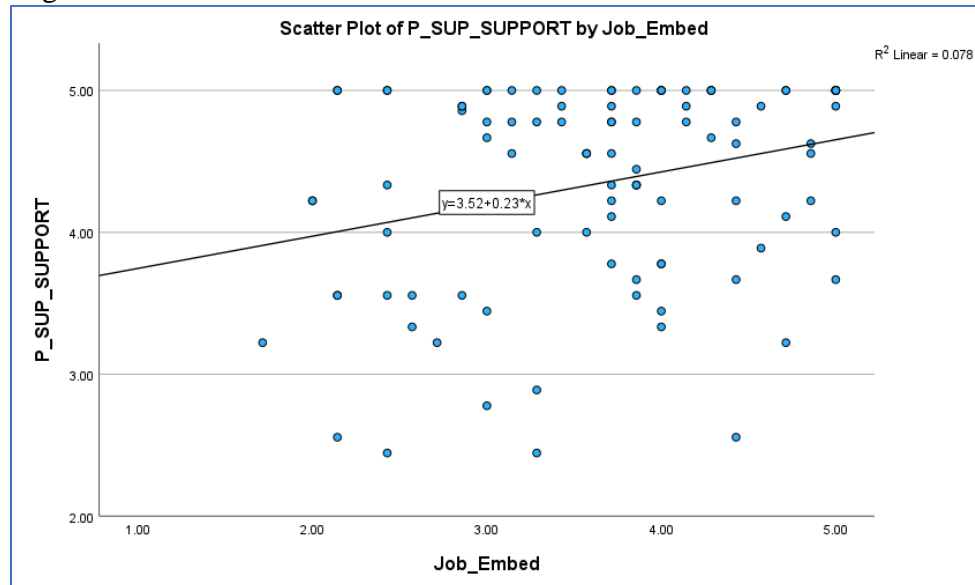
Perceived Supervisor Support was measured through a 9-item Likert-scaled survey developed by Ko et al. (2015) with Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$, indicating high reliability. Job embeddedness was measured with Crossley et al.'s (2007) 7-item Likert-scaled survey with high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$). Higher scores indicate a greater sense of job embeddedness. Key assumptions for data analysis included: variables that are ordinal, a linear relationship, no significant outliers, and that a p -value of less than .05 indicates a statistically significant result for all correlations. Data was synthesized using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient.

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

H1: Perceived supervisor support will be significantly related to job embeddedness within Special Operation Forces.

Prior to testing the hypothesis, data was examined against the assumptions for a Pearson's correlation. The scales or measures collected data on continuous variables. Data was scrubbed prior to analysis and no statistical outliers were found (See Appendix F: Stem and Leaf Outlier Charts). Analysis shows a positive linear relationship between perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness (Figure 11).

Figure 11.



Data was synthesized using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. This analysis found a significant correlation between PSS and JE, $r(101) = 0.279$, $p = 0.005$ and supported H1. Data is reflected in Table 9.

Table 9.

Pearson Correlation Analysis Perceived Supervisor Support and Job Embeddedness

		Perceived Supervisor Support	Job Embeddedness
Perceived Supervisor Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.279**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N		101
Job Embeddedness	Pearson Correlation	.279**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	101	

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Correlation Between Perceived Peer Support and Job Embeddedness

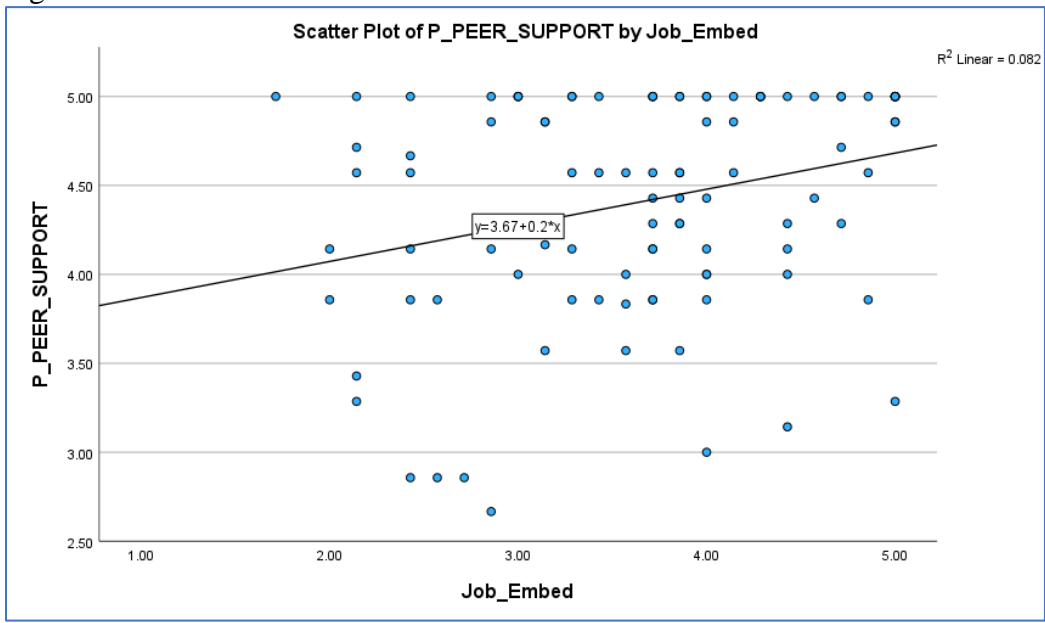
Perceived Peer Support This variable was assessed using a 7-item Likert-scaled survey developed by De Clercq et al. (2020) with a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$. Additionally, De Clercq et al.'s (2020) subscale is an application of the scale developed by Ladd and Henry (2000) and adapted from Eisenberger's (1986) original perceived organizational support. Eisenberger's scale had a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$, making it highly reliable and providing a solid foundation for subsequent scales. Job embeddedness was also measured with Crossley et al.'s (2007) 7-item Likert-scaled survey with high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$). Higher scores indicate a greater sense of job embeddedness. Key assumptions for data analysis included: variables that are ordinal, a linear relationship, no significant outliers, and that a p -value of less than .05 indicates a statistically significant result for all correlations. Data was synthesized using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient.

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between perceived peer support and job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

H2: Perceived peer support will be significantly related with job embeddedness within Special Operation Forces.

Prior to testing the hypothesis, data was examined against the assumptions for a Pearson’s correlation. The scales or measures collected data on continuous variables. Data was scrubbed prior to analysis and no statistical outliers were found (See Appendix F: Stem and Leaf Outlier Charts). Analysis shows a positive linear relationship between perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness (Figure 12).

Figure 12.



Data was synthesized using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient.

This analysis found a significant correlation between PPS and TI, $r(101) = 0.286$, $p = 0.004$ and supported H2. Data is reflected in Table 10.

Table 10.

Pearson Correlation Analysis Perceived Peer Support and Job Embeddedness

		Perceived Peer Support	Job Embeddedness
Perceived Peer Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.286**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N		101
Job Embeddedness	Pearson Correlation	.286**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	101	

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Regression Analysis Perceived Peer Support, Perceived Supervisor Support, Job Embeddedness

Perceived Supervisor Support was measured through a 9-item Likert-scaled survey developed by Ko et al. (2015) with Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$, indicating high reliability. Perceived Peer Support This variable was assessed using a 7-item Likert-scaled survey developed by De Clercq et al. (2020) with a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$. Additionally, De Clercq et al.'s (2020) subscale is an application of the scale developed by Ladd and Henry (2000) and adapted from Eisenberger's (1986) original perceived organizational support. Eisenberger's scale had a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$, making it highly reliable and providing a solid foundation for subsequent scales. Job embeddedness was also measured with Crossley et al.'s (2007) 7-item Likert-scaled survey with high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$). Higher scores indicate a greater sense of job embeddedness.

Key assumptions for a multiple regression analysis include: a dependent variable measured on a continuous scale; two or more independent variables measured on a continuous scale; independence of observation; linear relationship; homoscedasticity; multicollinearity; no significant outliers; and that residuals are approximately normally distributed. A Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted to determine the most significant independent variable on the dependent variable of job embeddedness.

RQ3: Will perceived peer support or perceived supervisor support have a stronger relationship, if any, to job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces?

H3: There will be a significant mean difference between perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support's relationship on job embeddedness in Special Operation Forces.

Synthesis of data revealed that *R-squared* (R^2) = 0.082, showing that 8 percent of variability scores in Job Embeddedness can be attributed to Perceived Peer Support. This data supported H3 and is reflected in Table 11.

Table 11.

Multiple Regression Analysis PPS, PSS, and JE

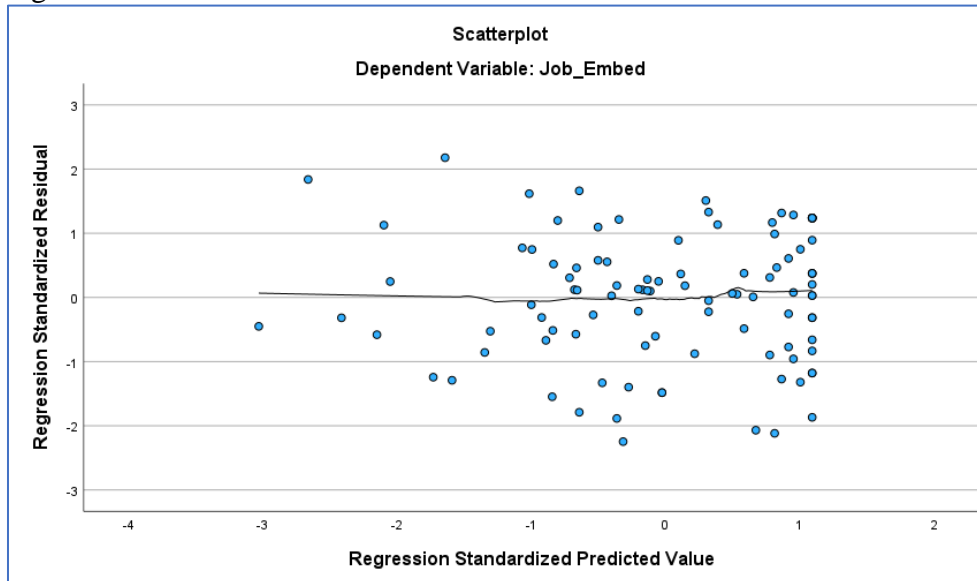
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin - Watson
1	.286 ^a	.082	-.073	.83553	2.184

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Peer Support

Prior to testing the hypothesis, data was examined against the assumptions for a multiple regression analysis. The scales or measures collected data on continuous variables. Data was scrubbed prior to analysis and no statistical outliers were found (See Appendix F: Stem and Leaf Outlier Charts).

The assumption of Homoscedasticity was assessed to show constant variance in the linear model and reveals homogeneity of variance. The data points are roughly the same distance from the line of best fit (See Figure 13).

Figure 13



The assumption of independence of observation was tested with the Durbin-Watson statistic and found to be 2.184 showing no correlation between consecutive residuals (Table 11). If this test had failed it could mean that the predictor variables are not statistically significant. The Durbin-Watson statistic solidifies the rejection of the H_0 hypothesis.

Data was assessed against the assumption of collinearity indicated that multicollinearity was not a concern (Perceived Peer Support, Tolerance = .766, VIF = 1.305; Perceived Supervisor Support, Tolerance = .766, VIF = 1.305). See Table 12.

Table 12.
Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
1							
	(Constant)	.384	.791	.485	.628		
	PSS	.732	.163	4.495	<.001	.766	1.305
	PPS	.094	.187	.502	.617	.766	1.305

The final assumption of normal distribution was accepted through a Normal P-P Plot and a histogram with superimposed curve (Figure 14 and Figure 15).

Figure 14

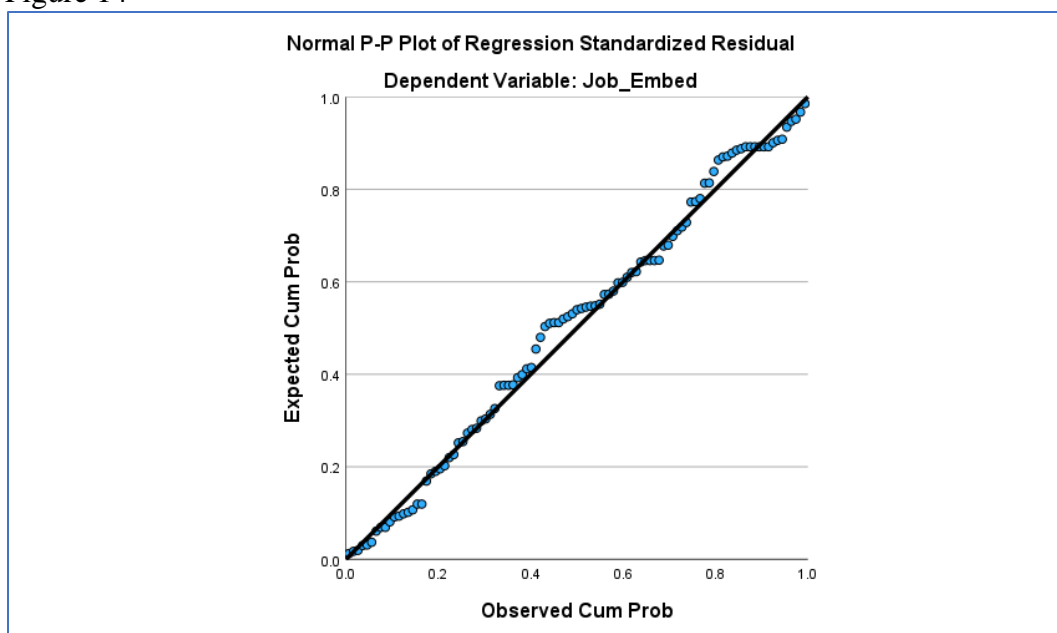
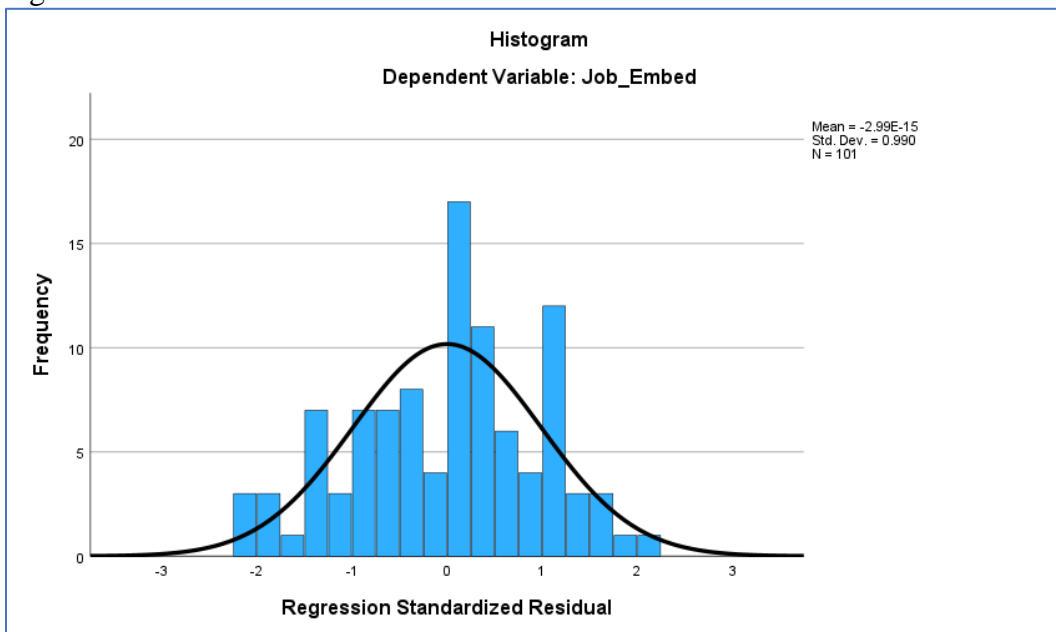


Figure 15



Correlation Between Perceived Supervisor Support and Turnover Intent

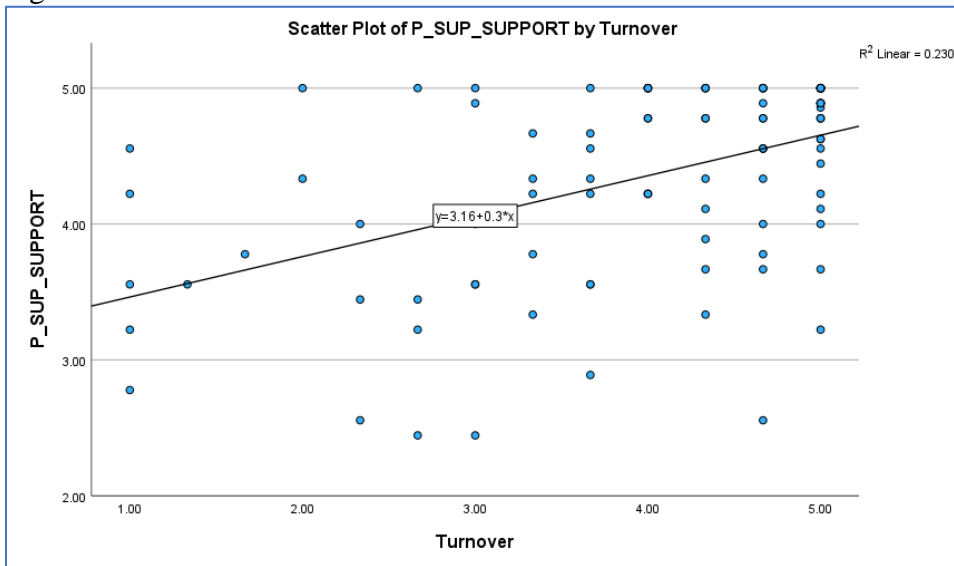
Perceived Supervisor Support was measured through a 9-item Likert-scaled survey developed by Ko et al. (2015) with Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$, indicating high reliability. Turnover intent was measured using Cohen's (1999) 3-item Likert-scaled survey based on its high reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$. Key assumptions for data analysis included: variables that are ordinal, a linear relationship, no significant outliers, and that a p -value of less than .05 indicates a statistically significant result for all correlations. Data was synthesized using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient.

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

H4: Perceived supervisor support is significantly related to turnover intent within Special Operation Forces.

Prior to testing the hypothesis, data was examined against the assumptions for a Pearson's correlation. The scales or measures collected data on continuous variables. Data was scrubbed prior to analysis and no statistical outliers were found (See Appendix F: Stem and Leaf Outlier Charts). Analysis shows a positive linear relationship between perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness (Figure 16).

Figure 16



Data was synthesized using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. This analysis found a significant correlation between PSS and TI, $r(101) = 0.479$, $p < 0.001$ and supported H4. Data is reflected in Table 13.

Table 13.

Correlation Analysis Between Perceived Supervisor Support and Turnover Intent.

		Perceived Supervisor Support	Turnover Intent
Perceived Supervisor Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.479**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		< .001
	N		101
Turnover Intent	Pearson Correlation	.479**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< .001	
	N	101	

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Correlation Between Perceived Peer Support and Turnover Intent

Perceived Peer Support was assessed using a 7-item Likert-scaled survey developed by De Clercq et al. (2020) with a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$. Additionally, De Clercq et al.'s (2020) subscale is an application of the scale developed by Ladd and Henry (2000) and adapted from Eisenberger's (1986) original perceived organizational support. Eisenberger's scale had a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$, making it highly reliable and providing a solid foundation for subsequent scales. Turnover intent was measured using Cohen's (1999) 3-item Likert-scaled survey based on its high reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$. Key assumptions for data analysis included: variables that are ordinal, a linear relationship, no significant outliers, and that a p -value of less than .05 indicates a statistically significant result for all correlations. Data was synthesized using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient.

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between perceived peer support and turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

H5: Perceived peer support is significantly related to turnover intent within Special Operation Forces.

Table 14.
Correlation Analysis Perceived Peer Support and Turnover Intent.

		Perceived Peer Support	Turnover Intent
Perceived Peer Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.379**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		< .001
	N		101
Job Embeddedness	Pearson Correlation	.379**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< .001	
	N	101	

** *Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)*

Regression Analysis Perceived Peer Support, Perceived Supervisor Support, Turnover Intent

Perceived Supervisor Support was measured through a 9-item Likert-scaled survey developed by Ko et al. (2015) with Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$, indicating high reliability. Perceived Peer Support This variable was assessed using a 7-item Likert-scaled survey developed by De Clercq et al. (2020) with a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$. Additionally, De Clercq et al.'s (2020) subscale is an application of the scale developed by Ladd and Henry (2000) and adapted from Eisenberger's (1986) original perceived organizational support. Eisenberger's scale had a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$, making it highly reliable and providing a solid foundation for subsequent scales. Turnover intent was measured using Cohen's (1999) 3-item Likert-scaled survey based on its high reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$. The higher the score the lower the level of turnover intent.

Key assumptions for a multiple regression analysis include: a dependent variable measured on a continuous scale; two or more independent variables measured on a continuous scale; independence of observation; linear relationship; homoscedasticity; multicollinearity; no significant outliers; and that residuals are approximately normally

distributed. A Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted to determine the most significant independent variable on the dependent variable of turnover intent.

RQ6: Will perceived peer support or perceived supervisor support have a stronger relationship, if any to turnover intent in Special Operation Forces?

H6: There will be a mean difference between perceived supervisor support and perceived supervisor support's relationship on turnover intent in Special Operation Forces.

Synthesis of data revealed that *R-squared* (R^2) = 0.230, showing that 23 percent of variability scores in Turnover Intent can be attributed to Perceived Supervisor Support. The This data supported H6 and is reflected in Table 15.

Table 15.
Multiple Regression Analysis PPS, PSS, and TI

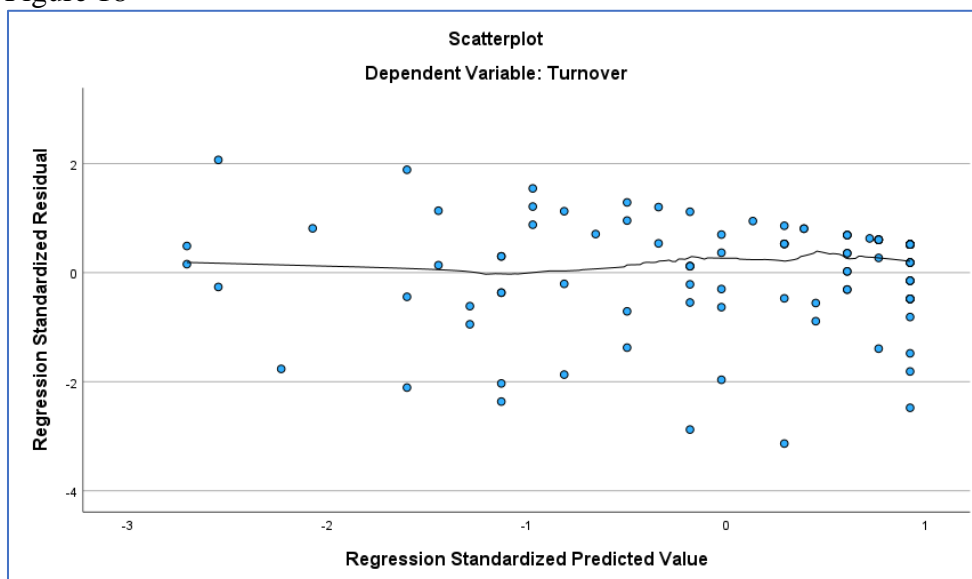
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin - Watson
1	.479 ^a	.230	.222	1.00132	2.059

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Supervisor Support

Prior to testing the hypothesis, data was examined against the assumptions for a multiple regression analysis. The scales or measures collected data on continuous variables. Data was scrubbed prior to analysis and no statistical outliers were found (See Appendix F: Stem and Leaf Outlier Charts).

The assumption of homoscedasticity was assessed to show constant variance in the linear model and reveals homogeneity of variance. The data points are roughly the same distance from the line of best fit (See Figure 18).

Figure 18



The assumption of independence of observation was tested with the Durbin-Watson statistic and found to be 2.059 showing no correlation between consecutive residuals (Table 15). If this test had failed it could mean that the predictor variables are not statistically significant. The Durbin-Watson statistic solidifies the rejection of the H_0 hypothesis.

Data was assessed against the assumption of collinearity indicated that multicollinearity was not a concern (Perceived Peer Support, Tolerance = .766, VIF = 1.305; Perceived Supervisor Support, Tolerance = .766, VIF = 1.305). See Table 16.

Table 16.
Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
	B	Std. Error					
1							
	(Constant)	1.455	.651	2.333	.028		
	PSS	.226	.134	.183	1.682	.096	.766 1.305
	PPS	.279	.154	.183	1.814	.073	.766 1.305

The final assumption of residuals being approximately normally distributed was accepted with a Normal P-P Plot and a histogram with superimposed curve (Figure 19 and Figure 20).

Figure 19

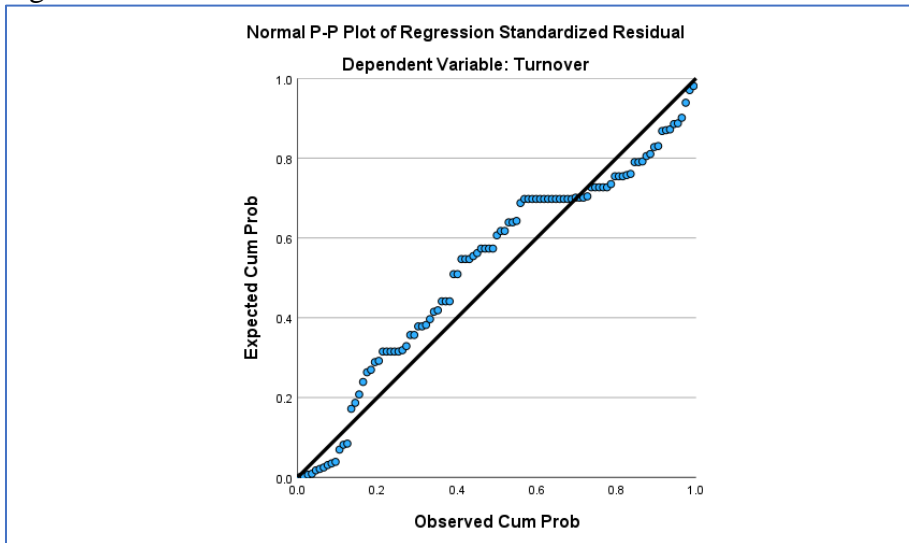
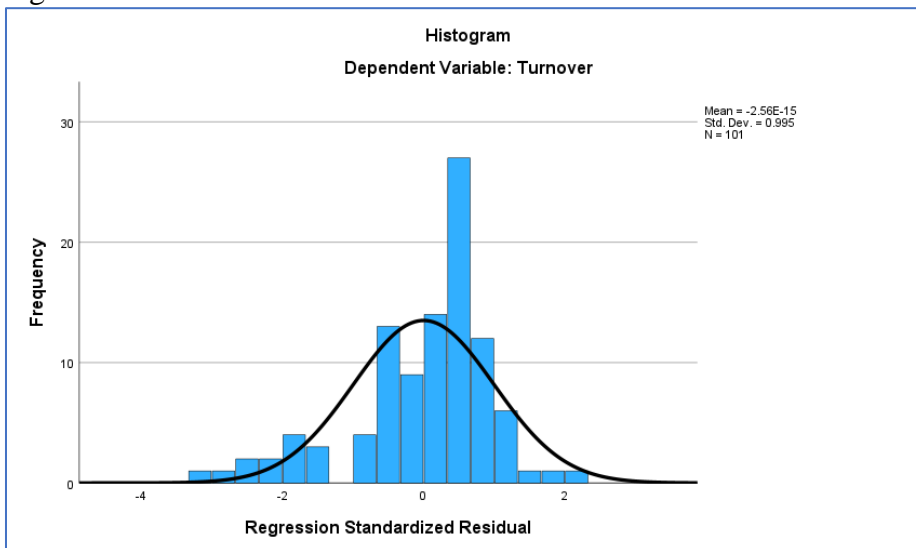


Figure 20



Summary

More than 300 Special Operations participants were invited by their respective unit administrative offices to take part in an anonymous online survey. Approximately 50 percent of those invited responded, yielding 140 usable responses. Participants were required to be over 18 years old and a member of a U.S. Special Operations Command subordinate unit.

The study focused on the constructs of job embeddedness, turnover intent, perceived supervisor support, and perceived peer support using relevant psychological surveys validated by Cronbach's alpha. This study was administered through an anonymous link provided by Qualtrics. A sample size of 101 participants was determined using power analysis for a medium effect size ($\rho = 0.09$) and a minimum power of 0.80 with an alpha of 0.05 (see Appendix A). Key Demographic information was collected from these 101 participants to provide an overall picture of Special Operations' formation.

Correlation data was synthesized using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, the most commonly used correlation coefficient. To assess the relationship strength of multiple independent variables, a Stepwise multiple regression analysis (MRA) was used. Hypothesis 1 was supported through correlation synthesis and showed a significant influence by perceived supervisor support on job embeddedness ($r(101) = 0.279, p = 0.005$, Table 9). Hypothesis 2 was accepted through correlation analysis and showed a significant influence by perceived peer support on job embeddedness ($r(101) = 0.286, p = 0.004$, Table 10). Hypothesis 3 was accepted through a stepwise multiple regression analysis that rejected the null hypothesis. The *R-squared* (R^2) = 0.082,

showing that 8 percent of variability scores in Job Embeddedness can be attributed to Perceived Peer Support (Table 11). Hypothesis 4 was accepted through correlation analysis and showed a significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intent ($r(101) = 0.479, p < 0.001$, Table 13). Hypothesis 5 was accepted through correlation analysis and showed that perceived peer support and turnover intent have a significant relationship ($r(101) = 0.379, p < 0.001$, Table 14). Hypothesis 6 was accepted through a stepwise multiple regression analysis that rejected the null hypothesis. The *R-squared* (R^2) = 0.230, showing that 23 percent of variability scores in Turnover Intent can be attributed to Perceived Supervisor Support (Table 15).

Empirical data showed that within this sample, perceived peer support had greater relationship with job embeddedness (Table 11) and that perceived supervisor support showed a more significant relationship with turnover intent (Table 15). This data will enable organizational leaders to have a greater understanding of the influences of job embeddedness and turnover intent within their organizations. Additionally, future researchers may expand on this study to delve further beyond the limitations inherent to the structure of this study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to quantitatively analyze the correlational relationship among perceived peer support and perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness and turnover intent in post-pandemic U.S. Special Operations. The key findings of this research indicate a strong significant correlation between perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness as well as perceived peer support and job embeddedness within the Special Operations Community. Synthesized data from 101 Special Operations Forces participants coalesced to reveal that perceived peer support had the strongest relationship with job embeddedness. Additional findings supported that both perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support had significant relationships with turnover intent, with the strongest being perceived supervisor support. One implication of this study for organizations is an understanding that even in stressful environments perceived peer support had a significant relationship with job embeddedness. Another implication of this study for organizations who operate in high-stress environments is the understanding of the impact of perceived leadership support's relationship to turnover intent. Additionally, organizations could mobilize this data to develop a holistic approach for retention and commitment within an organization.

Summary of Findings

Perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support both have significant relationships with job embeddedness. Further analysis revealed that perceived peer support emerged as having the strongest relationship with job embeddedness. The variables of perceived peer support and perceived supervisor support were found to have

a significant relationship with turnover intent. Further synthesis of the data revealed that the variable of perceived supervisor support had the strongest relationship with turnover intent.

The cross-sectional data set was collected through purposeful sampling of the Special Operations Community, a largely understudied and reclusive workforce. Over a period of two weeks, over 300 participants were invited to take part in an online anonymous survey by their perspective administrative sections. Inclusion criteria required that candidates be assigned to a U.S. Special Operations Command downtrace unit, over the age of 18 years of age, and have a minimum of one year experience. The data collection yielded 140 usable responses, with 101 being randomly selected based on a power analysis (Appendix A). The participation sample size was calculated for a medium effect size ($\rho = 0.09$), a minimum power of 0.80, and an alpha of 0.05. Participant's age, gender, years of experience, and military occupation were collected as control variables.

Hypothesis 1 was accepted by a Pearson analysis that revealed a significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and job embeddedness ($r(101) = 0.279, p = 0.005$, Table 9). Hypothesis 2 was accepted by a Pearson analysis that revealed a significant relationship between perceived peer support and job embeddedness ($r(101) = 0.286, p = 0.004$, Table 10). Hypothesis 3 sought a statistical difference between the two independent variables' influence on job embeddedness. A stepwise multiple regression analysis empirically showed that perceived peer support had the greatest relationship with job embeddedness in U.S. Special Operation Forces (*R-squared* (R^2) = 0.082, Table 11). Hypothesis 4 was accepted by a Pearson analysis that revealed a significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intent ($r(101)$

= 0.479, $p < 0.001$, Table 13). Hypothesis 5 was accepted by a Pearson analysis that revealed a significant relationship between perceived peer support and turnover intent ($r(101) = 0.379$, $p < 0.001$, Table 14). Hypothesis 6 was accepted by a stepwise multiple regression analysis and confirmed that perceived supervisor support had a greater relationship with turnover intent (*R-squared* (R^2) = 0.230, Table 15).

Discussion of Findings

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed a societal recalculation, as large portions of the global population were sent into a form of isolation in an attempt to curtail the pandemic. During this unprecedented phenomenon, individuals sought meaningfulness in an attempt to create harmony between their situation and their individual values (Todorova et al., 2021). This societal recalibration energized a seismic shift in the workforce as individuals reconsidered their vocational pursuits. The resulting widespread withdrawal became known as the Great Resignation (Cypress, 2022; Plante, 2023; Schmid & Melkote, 2022). This massive exodus of professionals created a critical shortfall of proficient workers that continues to reverberate throughout the workplace, generating a war for talent (Meriac et al., 2022). This abrupt turnover initiated cascading effects that left a proficiency deficit, and increased feelings of frustration and burnout (Oprea et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2018). This entropic and cyclic process only yielded more turnover. Bennett (2018) wrote that 40% of all turnover is due to burnout. Wang and Wang (2020) defined turnover as the all-inclusive manifestation of employee discontent with an organization.

Job embeddedness is an anti-withdrawal construct that embodies both theory and a model for retention. Based on field theory, this construct encapsulates the tethering of

interdependent psychological factors that anchor individuals to their workplace and reduce turnover intent (Mitchelle et al., 2001). Job embeddedness can be deconstructed into three primary tenets: fit, links, and sacrifice. The fit component centers on compatibility and comfort between the employee, the organization, and the community. According to Mitchell et al.'s (2001) work on job embeddedness the tenet of fit can be compartmentalized into off-the-job-fit and on-the-job-fit brackets. Social exchange theory anchors the tethering threads of employee characteristics to formulate a level of obligation towards members of the community and organization based on social exchanges (Burrows et al., 2021).

Organizational characteristics that support a perceived congruency of values play a pivotal role in job embeddedness. This analogous moral fiber fosters a level of trust while also providing a framework for self-enhancement through social identity theory (Eveland et al., 2018). The antecedents of perceived organizational support feed into the characteristics of an organization and strengthen levels of embeddedness. Organizational member exchange intricately weaves the fabric of perceived organizational support within the framework of social exchange theory (Dirican & Erdil, 2020; Sessa & Bowling, 2021). This antecedent hinges on the interaction between the employee and various organizational agents such as peers, subordinates, customers, and leaders. These interactions coalesce to sculpt the anthropomorphic essence of the organization itself with the ability to insulate the workforce from burnout and reduce turnover intent.

Perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support were both found to have a significant correlation to job embeddedness, with the strongest relationship nesting within perceived peer support. The constructs of perceived supervisor support and

perceived peer support were both found to have a significant relationship with turnover intent. This research concluded that the strongest relationship with turnover intent nests within perceived supervisor support.

Scripture encapsulates this harmonious construct through Peter's denial of Christ and redemptive experience on the shores of Galilea. The days that centered around the crucifixion and resurrection represent an unprecedented time in history, where the long-awaited Messiah was prophesied to free His people. Matthew records that Christ began to prepare His disciples for what was to come. Unwavering in His resolve, Jesus explained He had to go to Jerusalem to suffer at the hands of the elders and chief priests, to be killed and then be "raised again the third day" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Matthew 16:21). When Peter heard this, he pleaded that this shouldn't happen. Jesus rebuked him and explained that this was for a higher purpose, "thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of man" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Matthew 16:22). Luke records this situation and describes Jesus as, "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Luke 9:51). Matthew recounts that after Jesus was taken in the garden, Peter followed at a distance and is questioned about his association with Christ. Scripture records that after the third denial and the rooster crowed, he remembers how this moment was foretold and he began to weep bitterly (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, Matthew 29:69-75). Scripture tells of the resurrection and how Peter raced to the grave ahead of John to be greeted by the empty tomb. As Scriptural prophesy unfolded and the resurrection confirmed, Peter withdraws as the gravity of his action settles in. John records Peter returning to his previous profession of fishing on the shore of Galilea (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, John 21).

Peter's internalization of his failure yielded a physical and spiritual withdrawal that embodies the construct of defeat, burnout, and turnover intent. John, the beloved friend of Peter, recounts how our Shepherd lovingly sought out His broken follower on the shore of Galilea. Scripture paints the scene with Peter on a boat fishing and the disciples on the water with him, encapsulating the phenomenon of perceived peer support. Jesus begins His leader-member exchange by calling to His disciples from the shore. Peter, hearing the voice of the Master and his friend, leaps into the water to swim to shore. Scripture goes on to record the intimate and restorative conversation between Jesus and Peter (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, John 21). Jesus, the archetype of ethical leadership, embodies the Kingdom of Heaven through the psychological construct of transference (Chambers-Baltz et al., 2022; Dirican & Erdil, 2020). Through quality leader-member exchange, He addressed the heart of the issue to ensure Peter's restoration (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, John 21). Christ's actions embody the pinnacle of perceived supervisor support's impact on insulation from burnout and turnover intent. History records the aftermath of this event as Peter went on to live a valiant ministry, ultimately writing multiple books of the Bible with commitment unto martyrdom.

This study aligns with Scriptural wisdom in that perceived supervisor support had significant relationship to turnover intent ($r(101) = 0.479, p < 0.001$, Table 13) and job embeddedness ($r(101) = 0.279, p = 0.005$, Table 9). This study also replicates Scriptural wisdom in that perceived peer support has a significant correlation to job embeddedness ($r(101) = 0.286, p = 0.004$, Table 10), and a significant relationship with turnover intent ($r(101) = 0.379, p < 0.001$, Table 14). A Stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted during this study to discover that perceived supervisor support had the greatest

relationship with turnover intent. The *R-squared* (R^2) = 0.230, showing that 23.0 percent of variability scores in turnover intent can be attributed to perceived supervisor support. One key observation from the multiple regression analysis between perceived peer support, perceived supervisor support, and job embeddedness revealed that perceived peer support had a greater relationship with job embeddedness. The *R-squared* (R^2) = 0.082, showed that 8.2 percent of variability scores in job embeddedness were attributed to Perceived Peer Support. This may be because an individual's work peers can constitute both in-work and out-of-work influences.

The influence of the Great Resignation continues to reverberate within the manpower framework as institutions continue to be plagued by burnout and turnover. Many organizations often display a disproportionate focus on the influence of leadership and negate the influence of peers when framing perceived organizational support. The amalgamation of supervisor and peer support on the broad array of interdependent psychological factors impact an individual's life both inside and outside the organization to insulate individuals from burnout and anchor their commitment.

Implications

The COVID-19 pandemic created a societal upheaval as individuals were ushered into isolation to curtail the global impact of the virus. Todorova et al. (2021) noted that during this time, individuals contemplated their isolation and struggled with separation from family and loved ones. The complex environment created a deep need for meaningfulness, aimed at establishing an equilibrium between individual values and situational meaning. As the need for intimacy became dominant it created a shift of

priority and a withdrawal from efforts at work, creating the Great Resignation (Cypress, 2022; Plante, 2023; Schmid & Melkote, 2022).

This study offers a first-of-its-kind look into an isolated organization that has been largely immune from turnover intent despite the globalized feelings of burnout. U.S. Special Operations is an understudied occupational population that is largely closed off to outside communities. These isolated sub-cultures regularly engage in stressful work conditions coupled with excessive workloads, yet largely remain insulated from burnout and turnover intent. This study highlights the unique institutional dynamics that allow this organization to persevere in its commitment and thrive in unprecedented hardships. All organizations will negotiate adversarial terrain and how well they insulate and retain their workforce will predict their success.

Empirical evidence shows a positive correlation between burnout and turnover intent (Bennette, 2018). This study confirmed the relationship between perceived supervisor support, perceived peer support and turnover intent. The multiple regression analysis revealed that perceived supervisor support had the greatest relationship with turnover intent. This study highlighted that even within institutions that are hallmarked by commitment, the leader-member exchange has a strong relationship to turnover intent. The implication of this information provides empirical evidence that even within elite military units, where courage and commitment formulate the foundational canon, a leader's relationship with turnover is significant.

This study examined the U.S Special Operations community to determine the correlation and relationship of perceived supervisor and peer support on job embeddedness. This study found a significant correlation with the greatest relationship

with job embeddedness nested within perceived peer support. A study within Special Operations offers key insight into job embeddedness based on the coalescing of in-job and out-of-job tethers based on team unity. This peer network further formulates the foundation for connectivity and influence within this community for years to come. This study's data offered significant implication for institutions by showcasing how when peer support tethers are anchored inside both in-work and out-of-work domains it can have a stronger relationship with job embeddedness than supervisor support.

The significant implication of this research provides a tactical-to-strategic approach to understanding employee embeddedness and turnover intent in high stress environments. By incorporating quality leader-member exchange with meaningful peer support, organizations can avoid withdrawal and reduce turnover intent. Peter's redemptive pathway shows the significance of this approach and highlights the impact this had on his performance for the Kingdom.

Limitations

One of the key limitations associated with this study is the self-reporting aspect that may lead toward common method variance (Dirican & Erdil, 2020). There are potential limitations with a cross-sectional survey because it captures the cumulative feelings of past experiences. This could be mitigated with a longitudinal design. Additionally, initial enlistees may need to accumulate more experience to draw from to provide the best answer. Another limitation of this study is the exploration of only organizational embodiment by ethical leaders in organizations with a positive reputation and that it does not address organizations that have negative reputations and ethical leaders.

The sample demographic relative to the U.S. Special Operations community may have created an inadvertent limitation. Purposeful sampling of a workforce who have primarily been engaged in combat operations and high-stress deployments may have strengthened perceived peer support's correlation to job embeddedness beyond that of a global application. Additionally, data collection inside Special Operations presents a limiting factor within itself. Because these units operate at the highest level of military capability and are required to deploy with short notice, operational security considerations for anonymity are paramount. To protect this force, component public affairs offices required population data to be obscured. This opacification of population data does not allow for service or unit differences to be isolated, potentially limiting research. Additionally, a limiting factor of this study is the significantly larger male population that is inherent within the Special Operations community and reflected in this study, this may limit generalizability.

Recommendations for Future Research

One key recommendation for future research is to investigate the different demographics of time in Special Operations, age, and operational components more thoroughly. Examining the time within the Special Operations component could yield varied correlative results. These components can capture different experiences that influence perception and ultimately attitudes about turnover and job embeddedness. The component of time within Special Operations could yield different results based on the number of deployments, workload, and experiences. These high-stress and frequent engagements can influence peer bonds and perception of leadership. The component of age can reflect greater cognitive development and a more mature worldview. This can

yield different correlative responses based on how information is processed and perceptions are formed. Another recommendation for future research would be to investigate the differences correlational responses between Operator and Enabler. Studying these variables more thoroughly could yield different results because of the emphasis placed on the operational components. This emphasis could possibly create a greater sense of obligation towards an organization based on social exchange theory and influence results. shifting the level of perceived organizational support.

Additional research could be conducted by exploring the correlation between perceived supervisor support, perceived peer support, job embeddedness, and turnover intent within each service component under U.S. Special Operations Command. Each service component maintains administrative control over the service member despite their operational control under U.S. Special Operations Command. Human resources and benefits are key tenets to perceived organizational support which anchors these correlative constructs in the theoretical foundation of social exchange theory and social identity theory. Multiple military units would benefit from investigating these correlations more thoroughly to solidify retention within their ranks. Additional research would allow leaders to differentiate the most influential variables to help insulate their organizations from burnout and aid retention.

Summary

This study focused on correlational relationships between perceived peer support, perceived supervisor support, job embeddedness, and turnover intent within the Special Operations community post COVID-19. From a pool of 140 participants data was collected through an anonymous survey to assess quantitative correlation. This study concluded that higher levels of perceived supervisor support and perceived peer support had significant relationships with turnover intent. Further synthesis of data revealed the strongest correlation between perceived supervisor support and turnover intent, which corresponds with Costa et al.'s (2022) research. Further correlational analysis was conducted between perceived peer support, perceived supervisory support, and job embeddedness. Synthesis of this data revealed that perceived peer support had the strongest relationship with job embeddedness. The implications of this research provide an understanding of key venues that leaders can influence the relationship their followers have with burnout and turnover intent while operating in high stress environments. This study also provides organizations an understanding of how peer support is critical to increasing job embeddedness and reducing potential burnout.

Scripture encapsulates this construct through the story of Peter's denial, withdrawal, and redemption. The scenario unfolds with Peter withdrawing from ministry and returning to his previous profession of fishing (*King James Version*, 1796/2012, John 21). The redemptive path involved a deep and meaningful leader-member exchange between Peter and Jesus and the support of his peers. The implications of this study are profound for the Christian IO Psychologist as this study affirms Biblical wisdom and shows another point where science reaffirms Scripture.

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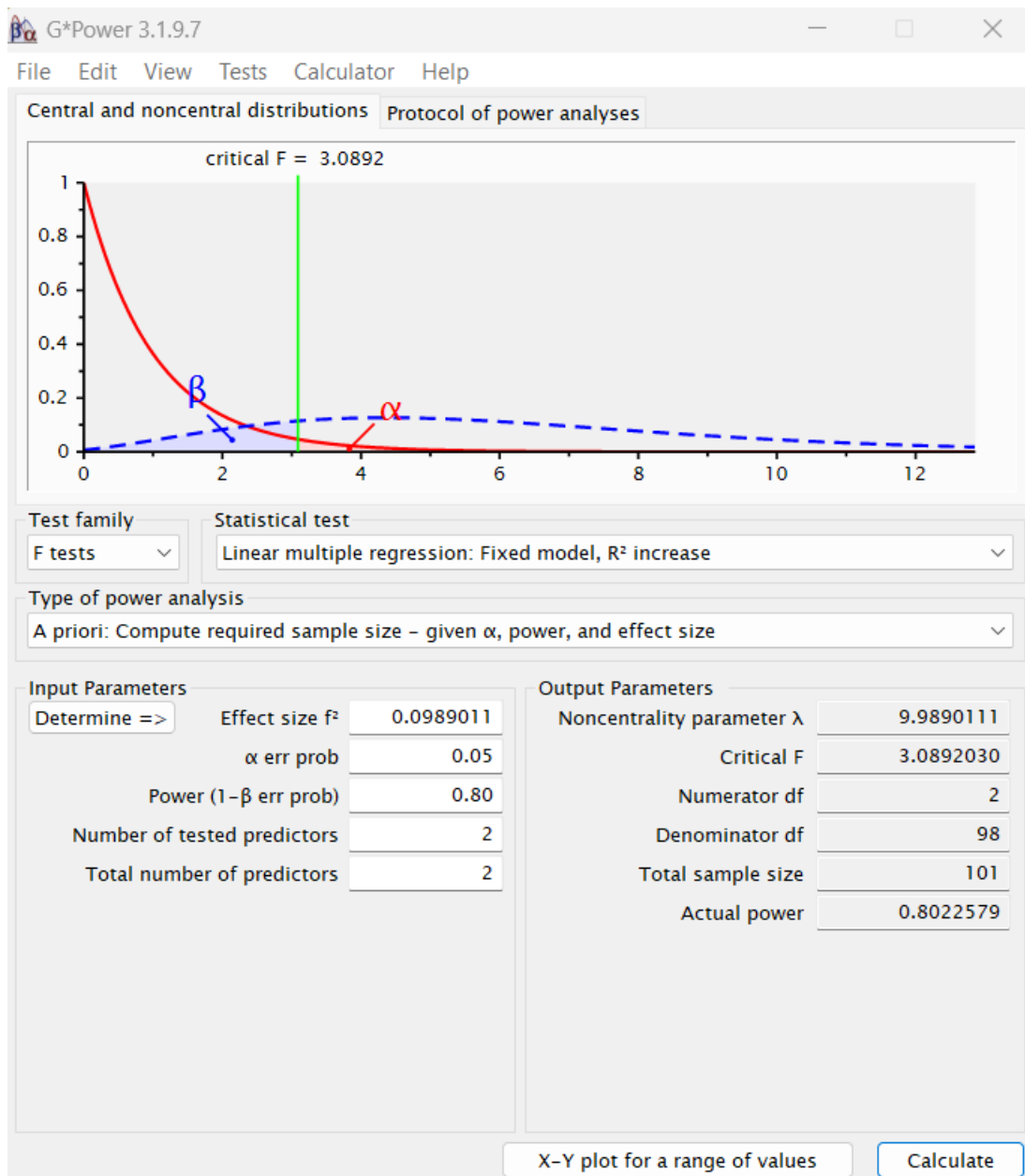
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APPENDIX A: A PROIRI ANALYSIS



APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Please take a moment to participate in this anonymous survey. I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree at Liberty University. The purpose of this research is to understand the relationship Perceived Leadership Support and Perceived Peer Support have on Job Embeddedness and Turnover Intent within Special Operations post COVID.

Participants must belong to an assigned U.S. Special Operations Command unit, have no less than 1 year experience, and be 18 years of age or older. Participants will be asked to complete a short (5-10-minute online survey. Participation will be completely anonymous and comply with the office of Public Affairs guidance. If you meet the study criteria and would like to participate, please click the link below. A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey.

(Link To Survey)

APPENDIX C: PROPOSED SURVEY

(Free For Research Purposes)

Perceived Supervisor Support Items

1. My supervisor keeps me informed of the things I need to know to do my job well.
2. My supervisor has expectations of my performance on the job that are realistic.
3. My supervisor recognizes when I do a good job.
4. My supervisor is supportive when I have a work problem.
5. My supervisor is fair and does not show favoritism.
6. My supervisor is responsive to my needs when I have family or personal business to take care of.
7. My supervisor is understanding when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work.
8. I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor.
9. My supervisor really cares about the effects that work demands have on my personal and family life.

Perceived Coworker Support Items

1. My coworkers are supportive of my goals and values.
2. Help is available from my coworkers when I have a problem.
3. My coworkers really care about my well-being.
4. My coworkers are willing to offer assistance to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.
5. Even if I did the best job possible, my coworkers would fail to notice (reverse coded)
6. My coworkers care about my opinions.
7. My coworkers are complimentary of my accomplishments at work.

Job Embeddedness (Global Measure of Job Embeddedness)

1. I feel attached to this organization.
2. It would be difficult for me to leave this organization.
3. I'm too caught up in this organization to leave.
4. I feel tied to this organization.
5. I simply could not leave the organization that I work for.
6. It would be easy for me to leave this organization (reverse coded)
7. I am tightly connected to this organization.

Turnover Intent

1. I think a lot about leaving the organization.
2. I am actively searching for an alternative to the organization.
3. As soon as it is possible, I will leave the organization.

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE TEMPLATE

(Public Use)

1. Age (years): _____
2. Tenure within Special Operations (years): _____
3. Occupation (Operator / Enabler): _____
4. Gender (male / female): _____

APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT

Information Sheet: Anonymous Survey

Title of the Project: The relationships of perceived supervisor and peer support on job embeddedness and turnover intent in Special Operations.

Principal Investigator: Jason Howard, Doctoral Candidate School for Behavioral Sciences Liberty University.

You are invited to participate in a research study. Participants must belong to an assigned U.S. Special Operations Command unit, have no less than 1 year experience, and be 18 years of age or older. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

The purpose of the study is to assess the relationship between perceived supervisor support perceived peer support on job embeddedness and turnover intent in Special Operations post-pandemic.

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participants will be asked to answer an online multiple-choice survey that will be provided through the unit's administrative office. Participation is ANONYMOUS in accordance with the Public Affairs Office and will take no longer than 10min.
2. Once completed and submitted, participants are asked to close out of the browser.

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include a more thorough understanding of commitment and retention within high-stress work environments.

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

The records of this study will be kept private. Participant responses to the online survey will be anonymous, and no data will be linked to you. All research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Data will be stored securely on a password-locked computer that is always secured behind a locked door. After three years all electronic records will be deleted and scrubbed from the device.

The researcher serves as a Command Sergeant Major in a Special Operations unit. To limit potential or perceived conflicts data collection will be anonymous so that the researcher will not know who participated. No identifying data is collected during the survey.

This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your assigned unit. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

The researcher conducting this study is Jason Howard. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him.

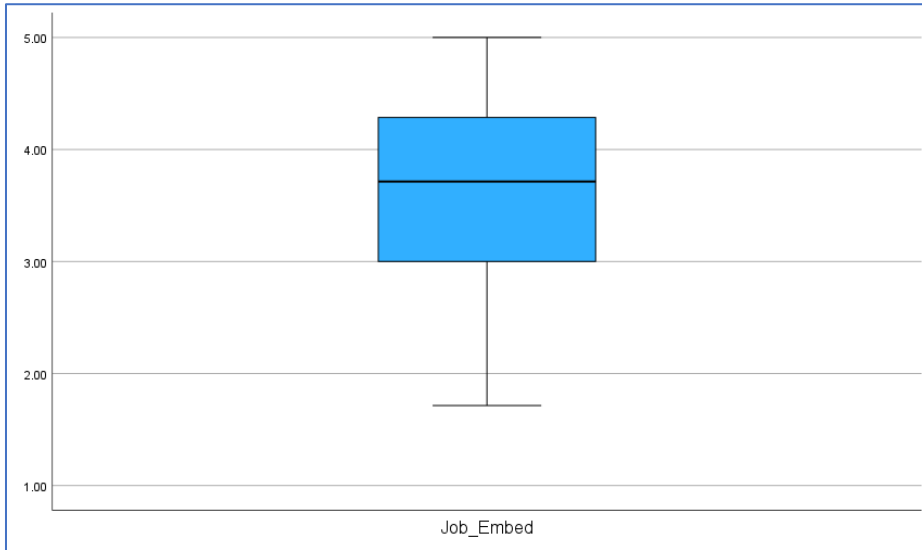
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

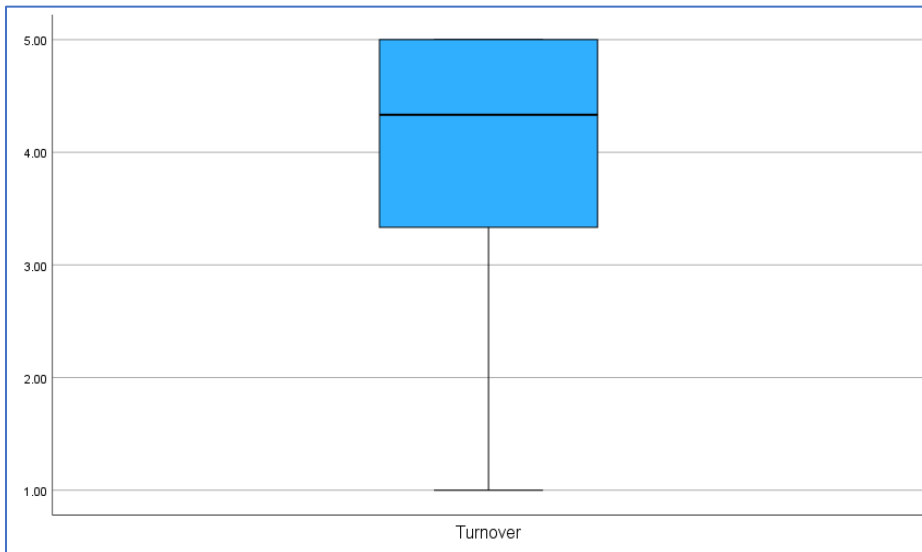
Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

APPENDIX F: STEM AND LEAF CHARTS FOR OUTLIERS

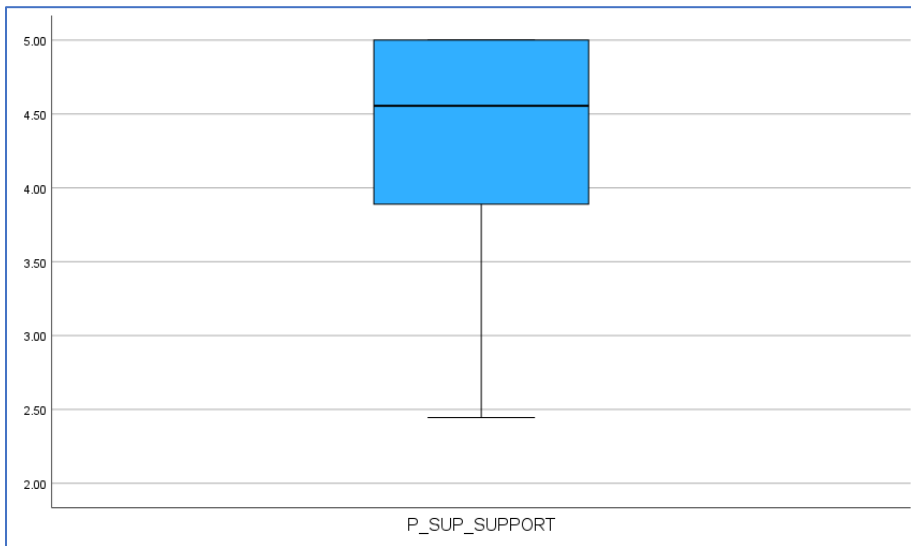
Job Embeddedness



Turnover



Perceived Supervisor Support



Perceived Peer Support

