

# Young adults in flux: The role of dimensions of emerging adulthood and psychological capital in the intention to remain in an organization

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**Abstract Objective.** Research dedicated to turnover intentions has proliferated in the last decades, identifying various predictors of intention to voluntarily quit the organization. However, although previous studies indicated that younger employees are more prone to turnover intentions, emerging adulthood, as a specific developmental period, has been neglected in previous research dedication to turnover intentions. Emerging adulthood corresponds to ages 18–29 years, during which individuals consider themselves as no longer adolescents, but not yet as full-fledged adults. Besides the achievement of developmental milestones, various psychologically based qualities – known as *dimensions of emerging adulthood* – are differentiated in a research literature, and can play a role in turnover intentions. Relatedly, although *Psychological capital* (PsyCap) – as a second-order construct integrating hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism – has been established as a correlate of intention to remain in the organization in previous studies, the role of positive psychological resources in intention to stay in an organization during emerging adulthood, as a specific developmental period, has been neglected. Moreover, recent literature also indicates that the relationship between psychological capital and turnover intention could be indirect – i.e., mediated by other variables such as *work engagement* – and that a similar pattern of results could be expected also in the case of dimensions of emerging adulthood. Thus, the aim of the present paper is to examine the role of (A) dimensions of emerging adulthood (as potentially important developmental factors) and (B) psychological capital (as a positive psychological state that could be purposefully cultivated) in

the intention to remain in the organization both directly, and indirectly (i.e., potentially mediated via work engagement).

*Method.* The sample consisted of 192 people in the age range of 19-29 years. A cross-sectional design has been employed. *Psychological capital* (CPC - 12R), *Dimensions of emerging adulthood* (IDEA-8), *Work engagement* (UWES - 17), *Intention to remain in the current organization* (scale), and *Big-Five* personality traits (BFI-II-Short) have been used.

*Results.* Results indicated that the intention to remain in the organization was positively related to engagement and to psychological capital, but it was not related to dimensions of emerging adulthood. In fact, a model with psychological capital - as the only predictor - was preferred according to the Bayesian multi-model linear regression. Moreover, mediation analysis indicated that conditional on the model assumption - X (psychological capital) → M (work engagement) → Y (intention to remain in the organization), work engagement can account for a significant portion of the variance between X and Y. A similar pattern of results occurred concerning one dimension of emerging adulthood, namely the feeling in-between - X (feeling in between) → M (work engagement) → Y (intention to remain in the organization). However, other dimensions of emerging adulthood were not relevant in the present context. The further exploratory analysis also indicated that dedication - as specific aspect of engagement - could be of some importance in the present context.

*Conclusions.* It can be concluded that psychological capital predicted intention to remain in the current organization both directly and indirectly - via work engagement - and this could have practical implications as it seems that psychological capital is possible to cultivate. Moreover, although the role of feeling in-between was rather indirect, smaller, and less certain, it can help us to better understand the nuances of the turnover intentions in a turbulent period of emerging adulthood.

*Limitations.* The main limitation of the present study is the cross-sectional research design and the convenience sampling. Therefore, replication and further extensions are recommended for future research.

**Keywords** Psychological capital, dimensions of emerging adulthood, engagement, intention to remain in the organization, turnover intentions.