



Examining the Link between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention in Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention of the employees of public universities of Bahawalpur was examined in this study. The main purpose was to investigate the level of job satisfaction, make a prediction of employees' intent to quit their jobs, and examine the relationship between both variables. Descriptive research design was used and data was obtained from the employees of public universities using a structured questionnaire. A convenience sampling technique was used for selecting the respondents. The results indicated that employees overall were satisfied with their work, especially with regard to organizational commitment, co-worker relations, recognition and supervision. There was, however, some discontent expressed about the salaries and welfare policies. The findings also showed that job satisfaction was significantly negatively related to turnover intention implying that those who were more satisfied with their jobs were less inclined to think of leaving their institutions. On the other hand, increased satisfaction with the job was related to reduced turnover intentions. The study ends that the enhancement of job satisfaction can be a key to decrease the intention to turn over work and increase organization stability. University management is recommended to make efforts to enhance the compensation packages, build a supportive work atmosphere, develop clear promotion processes, and design employee recognition mechanisms, to boost employee retention and organizational commitment.



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1. Introduction

Organizations are most successful when their employees are happy and their happiness is very important for organizational effectiveness, productivity and sustainability. A successful institution will work to provide a workplace atmosphere of cooperation, trust, recognition and employee commitment to accomplish individual and organizational objectives. Job satisfaction is a composite of attitudes, feelings and perceptions of employees about their job and work environment (Spector, 1997). It is a measure of the degree of positive attitudes that employees have towards different aspects of their work, such as their compensation, their supervisor, their promotion opportunities, their working environments, and their relationships with their co-workers.

It has been consistently stated that the importance of employee satisfaction in the organization for achieving success cannot be overlooked. The happy workers will tend to be more productive, committed and loyal to the organization; the displeased workers, on the other hand, will be more prone to developing low morale and intentions to leave the job. So, it is essential for organizations to find ways to increase employee satisfaction and keep their valuable and experienced employees. Javed, Balouch and Hassan (2014) say that those firms which successfully meet the needs and expectations of their employees are more likely to be successful and gain a competitive edge in the long run.

Job satisfaction has been defined as a positive affective response to the evaluation of the job and job experiences (Locke, 1976). Several factors, such as salary and benefits, promotion opportunity, supervision, working conditions, recognition, job security and working relationships with co-workers, influence it. If these factors are perceived positively, then employees are more likely to demonstrate a high level of organizational commitment and to have lower intentions to terminate their relationships with the organization.

The voluntary and purposeful desire of an employee to leave an organization in the near future is called employee turnover intention. One of the best predictors of real employee turnover. The impact of high intention to turn-over on organizational performance can be detrimental because of high recruitment and training expenses, low productivity, and instability of the organization. Thus, the determinants of intention to turn over has become an issue of interest for organizational leaders and human resource managers.

Employee satisfaction is significant in higher education institutions as the quality of educational services greatly relies on the commitment of and performance of academic and administrative staff. Institutions that offer work environments that are supportive, equitable, recognized, and have potential career development opportunities have higher chances of sustaining qualified employees and meeting institutional goals appropriately.

Although employee satisfaction and retention is gaining importance in the era of modern society, there is a scarcity of empirical evidence in the context of Pakistan that is needed to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover intention among employees at the university level especially in the context of Bahawalpur. Hence, the aim of this study was to investigate the job satisfaction level, to find out the intentions of the employees to quit from the organization and to investigate the correlation among job satisfaction and intentions to quit their jobs in the public universities of Bahawalpur. The results of the study will be helpful to the university administrators and policymakers for the creation of strategies to increase employee satisfaction, boost employee commitment, and decrease employee turnover intentions.

2. Literature Review

Job satisfaction has been the subject of theoretical and research examination in the fields of organization and education since it plays a significant role in shaping the performance of employees, organizational commitment, and retention. It is a measure of the overall experience of employees and encompasses compensation, supervision, promotion potential, recognition, working conditions, and work-life balance. The studies conducted recently always suggest that the employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more committed to the organizations and have lower intentions to quit (Hulme, 2022).

Studies from the last five years indicate that organizational support and a positive work climate positively influence job satisfaction, as well as decreasing the likelihood of employee turnover. Poor institutional support, low career progression, and poor working conditions were found to exert a high turnover intention among University employees (Mgaiwa, 2023). Likewise, Zhang, Li and Gamble (2023) discovered that organizational commitment acts as a mediator between job satisfaction and turnover intention, suggesting that employees who are satisfied with their jobs are less inclined to look for alternative job opportunities.

Research released in 2024 continue to show that leadership capability, fair pay, organizational justice and work-life balance are still key factors in employee attrition. Wang et al. (2024) found that job satisfaction was one of the most significant factors determining

the intention to leave in the organization, while Aljarid and Azam (2024) cited compensation, career development and perceived organizational support as significant factors that affect the intention to leave of academic staff in the organization. These results have been confirmed in more recent studies. Higher satisfaction with their jobs, as found by Hutapea and Wulansari, has significant negative effect on the intention to leave the organization, while the level of organizational commitment has a mediating effect. Similarly, Anse et al. (2025) and Opolot (2026) found that supportive organizational culture, employee commitment, recognition, and professional development opportunities increase job satisfaction and reduce employees' intention to quit.

Job satisfaction is one of the most popular topics for study in the field of organizational behavior and human resources management. It is defined as the feelings that employees have towards their jobs and work environment. Locke (1976) defines job satisfaction as an "emotional response to the job and job experiences that is pleasurable. In the same way, Spector (1997) defined job satisfaction as how much people like or dislike their jobs. There are a number of factors that affect job satisfaction: these are compensation, promotion opportunities, supervision, working conditions, recognition, job security and the relationships with colleagues. Employee's positive attitude regarding these factors results in commitment, motivation, and loyalty toward the organizations.

Turnover intention is the conscious and deliberate decision of an employee to leave an organization in the near future ((Tett & Meyer, 1993). It is believed to be the best predictor of true employee turnover (Mobley, 1977). Dissatisfied workers are likely to form intentions to leave the organization while satisfied workers are likely to keep and stay committed to their organization. Organizations may encounter numerous problems associated with high turnover intention, such as higher hiring and training expenses, the loss of organizational knowledge, decreased productivity and disruption of workplace relationships (Dess & Shaw, 2001). Thus, knowledge of factors influencing employees' turnover intention is important when conducting effective human resource management.

In Iran, Mosadeghrad, Ferlie and Rosenberg (2008) revealed that job satisfaction was negatively correlated with turnover intention for hospital employees. Likewise, Akhtar (2016) found that job satisfaction and salary are significant factors that decreased employee turnover intent in the business colleges in Pakistan. One of the most significant factors which affect job satisfaction is compensation. Frye (2004) stated pay fairness and competitiveness is a key factor in attracting and retaining good employees in the organization. A lack of adequate salary and benefits rates has been consistently linked to turnover intentions through previous studies, while increased salary and benefits rates will lead to increased employee satisfaction and retention (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000; Nguyen, 2003).

Promotion opportunities motivate and give the employee a feeling of career growth. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment is promoted by transparent and merit-based promotion systems, while limited advancement opportunities can lead to employee dissatisfaction and intention to quit. Another critical factor that affects the employee's satisfaction is supportive supervision. Supervisors who provide guidance, feedback, and fair treatment to employees are likely to experience higher job satisfaction and less turnover intentions (Boshoff & Allen, 2000). Good relationships between staff helps to foster a positive working environment and enhance organisational performance. Cooperation, teamwork and interpersonal support have been found to be important factors in employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Recognition is a strong motivator and helps to boost the value and sense of belonging of employees. When employees feel valued and respected, they are more likely to stay with the company and work up to their potential. Organizational commitment is the psychological bond of jobholders to the organization. Highly committed employees see the goals of the organization as their goals, and they are less likely to leave the job. In the past, it has been found that organizational commitment has a negative relationship with Turnover intention and a positive relationship with job satisfaction. The study is supported by Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (1959) which talks about the factors which contribute to Job Satisfaction and these were categorized into hygiene factors and motivators. The hygiene factors are salary, supervision, working conditions and job security; the motivators are recognition,

achievement, responsibility and advancement. Herzberg suggested that the job satisfaction is increased by motivators, while hygiene factors are responsible for job dissatisfaction.

The study is also drawn on from Mobley's Turnover Model (1977) which suggests that if one is displeased in their job, they first consider other available job options and then eventually form a turnover intention. Thus, there is a relationship between job satisfaction and intention to quit, as improving job satisfaction could help decrease the intention to leave the organization. There are several studies which have investigated job satisfaction and intention to leave in various organizational environment, but very few studies have been conducted on university employees in Pakistan, in particular, in the context of Bahawalpur. Moreover, there is a lack of studies examining the impact of individual job satisfaction components like pay and benefits, organizational commitment, recognition, supervision, and co-worker relationships on turnover intention for university employees. Hence, this study aims at addressing this gap by exploring the link between job satisfaction and intention to quit in public universities of Bahawalpur.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The quantitative and descriptive survey research design was used in this study to investigate the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention of the University Staff in Bahawalpur. The survey method was found to be suitable as it allows to gather the standardized information from a wide group of respondents and allows to statistically analyse the variables being examined.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population were all academic and administrative staff working in public universities of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) and Government Sadiq College Women University (GSCWU) were chosen as the universities for the study. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling technique from the target population. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed to the employees of the university and 306 questionnaires were returned and analyzed, with a response rate of 61.2 percent.

3.3 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire adapted from existing scales on job satisfaction and turnover intention was used to collect data. The instrument was made up of 78 items rated on a five-point likert-type scale with a range of 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The purpose of this questionnaire was to capture a variety of dimensions of job satisfaction and employees' turnover intentions.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was evaluated by experts in educational research and human resource management to ensure the content validity of the questionnaire. They recommended some changes that were included in the final instrument. Therefore, a pilot study was undertaken before the main survey to determine how clear and suitable the questionnaire items were. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the instrument. The overall reliability coefficient was 0.819 which is higher than the minimum acceptable of 0.70, suggesting that the instrument has good internal consistency and reliability.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The researchers personally administered the questionnaires to the employees of selected Universities. All the respondents were briefed on the purpose of the research and their responses would be kept confidential and for academic research only. The completed questionnaires were picked up and checked for completion before then being put into the analysis database.

3.6 Construction of Job Satisfaction Dimensions

The questionnaire consisted of 78 statements, which measured various components of job satisfaction. Items were classified according to their construct to group the items into higher-order dimensions, for meaningful interpretation and to limit complexity of the data. It is one of the most common approaches in organizational and behavioral research to reduce a number of indicators into theoretically meaningful constructs.

Other items that were similar were grouped within the following dimensions: Pay and Benefits, Promotion Opportunities, Supervision, Co-worker Relations, Nature of Work, Working Conditions, Recognition and Respect, Job Security, Organizational Commitment, and Work-Family Balance. For each dimension, the mean score was computed by averaging the mean scores of all the items in the dimension. This approach 1) streamlined the number of questionnaire items down to a more manageable number and 2) made the results of the questionnaire easier to interpret and understand.

4. Data Analysis

These data seem to attempt to assess Job Satisfaction in a number of dimensions. A short version of this may be as follows.

The Pay and Benefits dimension had a mean score of 2.92, which is lower than the criterion value of 3.00. This means that, on average, the respondents were not happy with the compensation and benefit package that they receive. The employees raised issues about the payment they receive, the equity of the payment against their efforts and the facilities given by the institution. The lowest ratings in the study were also associated with salary and financial rewards (that the institution pays is better than that of other institutions; that the financial reward received is adequate). The results indicate that the compensation of salary is a major issue that employees are concerned with and could affect their job satisfaction. Hence, it is important that the management of the institutions review the salaries, incentives and employee benefits to increase employee satisfaction and motivation.

The mean score for the Promotion Opportunities dimension was 3.14, which is higher than the benchmark value of 3.00. This suggests that respondents had a positive attitude towards promotion and job progression within their institutions in general. Employees think that good performance would lead to promotion and the opportunities for promotion are relatively good. They also felt that promotion systems were somewhat transparent and had a fair opportunity for advancement for employees. The mean scores, however, are only moderately higher than the criterion, indicating that while overall employees are satisfied with promotion opportunities, improvements are needed to be more transparent, fair, and communicative about the promotion policies. Improving promotion systems based on merit and making the criteria for advancement visible to employees could also increase their trust in these promotion mechanisms and help promote job satisfaction.

The Supervision dimension had an average mean score of 3.15, higher than the criterion of 3.00, thus participants were generally satisfied with the supervisory practices in their institutions. Employees saw their supervisors as supportive, approachable and fair in their handling of issues in the workplace. The results indicate that supervisors offer support when workers have problems, acknowledge high performance, and are polite and respectful to their workers. In addition, respondents felt that their supervisors take into account their employees' skills, work efforts, job duties, and needs when they make decisions and give rewards. This is indicative of having a positive attitude towards management support and workplace fairness. Supervision can improve employee motivation, performance and commitment to the organization by fostering a positive and respectful workplace.

In regards to the Co-worker Relations dimension, the respondents had an average mean score of 3.25, which is higher than the benchmark value of 3.00, suggesting that the relationship with coworkers was good and overall they were satisfied. Staff commented that there was a great deal of collaboration, communication and good relationships with other staff. They thought that while working closely with teachers and colleagues is relatively easy within their own institution, they felt that this is not the case in other settings. The relatively

high mean score implies that co-workers are able to create a supportive and collaborative work environment that can help to boost teamwork, minimize stress in the workplace, and improve overall job performance. It is also important for employees to have positive relationships with each other in the workplace because of the impact on organizational harmony and employee well-being.

The average mean score for the Nature of Work dimension was at 3.18 which is above the benchmark value of 3.00, meaning that respondents were generally content with the nature and characteristics of their jobs. Employees felt that their work matched their skills, abilities and interests and had positive attitudes regarding their job duties and responsibilities. The results also indicate that the respondents like doing their assigned work, like their responsibility in their job, think their work is meaningful and fit for their competencies. They also mentioned that they had fairly good autonomy and decision making power in performing their work, which is a positive influence on satisfaction at work.

The mean score for the Working Conditions dimension was 3.06, slightly higher than the criterion score of 3.00. This means that the respondents' level of satisfaction with the physical and environmental conditions of the workplace was moderate. The working environment in general, in terms of facilities, infrastructure, ventilation, air conditioning and suitability of working conditions, are considered satisfactory by the employees in general. While there is a positive perception, this is not very high when compared with various aspects of job satisfaction. This indicates that the working conditions of their employees are considered satisfactory but there is room for improvement in the working environment and the facilities of the workplace. An improvement in the physical facilities and a better working environment may lead to greater satisfaction and productivity amongst employees.

The average mean score for the Recognition and Respect dimension was 3.23, higher than the benchmark value of 3.00, showing that respondents were fairly content with the recognition and respect they receive in their institutions. Staff members felt valued, their work is valued by others and they are given positive feedback when they are good at their job. The results also indicate that the employees feel that they are respected members of their institutions and that their profession has a positive social status. Supervisor and co-worker recognition, workplace and societal respect seems to positively impact employee's sense of value and self worth. The relatively high mean score indicates that the institutions have created a climate in which employees feel valued and valued. This recognition can boost motivation, job performance and organizational commitment.

The mean average score for the Job Security dimension was 3.13 with the criterion value being 3.00, thus respondents were generally satisfied with the security provided to their jobs. Employees felt that their jobs were fairly secure and that there was no threat of their jobs being easily lost. They also believed that there would be no serious repercussions like dismissal if they made any minor errors. Employees' mean score was positive indicating that they have a reasonable sense of security regarding their employment in the institution; this may help alleviate the level of stress among employees and help to build commitment to the organization. When staff feel safe in their jobs, they are more likely to concentrate on their work, work better, and have long-term connections with their employer.

Table 4.1: Summary of Job Satisfaction Dimensions (N = 306)

Dimension	Mean	Dimension	Mean
Pay and Benefits	2.92	Working Conditions	3.06
Promotion Opportunities	3.14	Recognition and Respect	3.23
Supervision	3.15	Job Security	3.13
Co-worker Relations	3.25	Organizational Commitment	3.28
Nature of Work	3.18	Work-Family Balance	3.02
Overall Job Satisfaction Mean		3.14	

The Organizational Commitment dimension had an average mean score of 3.28 which is in the higher end of the range reported in the study and is significantly higher than the criterion score of 3.00. This shows that the respondents had a high degree of attachment, loyalty and commitment to their institutions. Staff felt good about their affiliation to their institutions, were willing to support their institution's success and stated that they would

recommend their institution as a good place to work. The results also indicate that staff members will be prepared to protect the image of their institutions, and that they feel valued when their institutions are praised. These attitudes demonstrate important indicators of organizational commitment, namely the emotional bond that exists between employees and their institutions. The mean score is relatively high, indicating that the respondents associate positively with the goals and values of their institutions and that they have a positive motivation to support the development and success of their institutions. Such involvement can positively impact productivity, decrease turnover intentions, and enhance organizational effectiveness.

The Work–Family Balance dimension has an average mean score of 3.02, just slightly over the criterion score of 3.00. This suggests that individuals had moderate levels of work–family conflict and were only slightly satisfied with their work–family balance. Employees also reported that the demands of the job often intrude on their family life, reduce time available for family activities and hinder the ability to effectively carry out family responsibilities. The results indicate that a large number of respondents view their work demands as more of an intrusion into their personal/family life than family demands into their work. The overall mean score suggests agreement with work–family conflict statements, but relatively low scores on this measure compared to other measures suggest that employees have concerns about work–family balance. These findings suggest that institutions should take steps to create a more positive balance between work and family life, for example, by adopting flexible working practices, manageable workloads and supportive organizational practices. Work–family balance can be improved, leading to better employee wellness, less stress, and greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Table 4.2 gives the overall mean scores of the main dimensions of job satisfaction for university staffs. The overall mean score of 3.14 shows that in general, the respondents were satisfied with their job but there were differences in the level of satisfaction in each dimension. Employees have a strong sense of loyalty and attachment to their institutions as the highest mean was recorded for Organizational Commitment ($M = 3.28$). Participants felt good about their organizations, were willing to invest in the success of their organizations, and were positive about their institutions. This discovery indicates that workers have grown to be emotionally attached to their workplaces, which is advantageous for the effectiveness of the organization and employee retention.

Co-worker Relations ($M = 3.25$) was the second highest mean score. The positive interpersonal relationship between employees is manifested by cooperation, teamwork and communication. By fostering collaboration and mutual support among members, good relationships ensure a positive workplace atmosphere and boost staff morale and satisfaction. Likewise, Recognition and Respect ($M = 3.23$) had a relatively high mean score, suggesting that the employees feel they are being recognized and respected in their institutions. Most people felt their work is recognised, respected and valued. A sense of recognition and respect are key motivational factors which have a positive impact on employee commitment and performance.

The dimension of Nature of Work ($M = 3.18$) and Supervision ($M = 3.15$) also had good scores. The employees felt their work had meaning, matched their skills and was interesting. Furthermore, they were happy with the management practices that supervisors provide, which indicates support, guidance and fairness. Supervision and meaningful work are vital ingredients in a positive work place.

Table 4.2: Top Five Highest Rated Statements

Rank	Statement	Mean
1	I do my best for the success of this institution	3.42
2	I am proud to be a part of this institution	3.36
3	My coworker cooperate with me	3.34
4	I have an effective working relationship with my coworker	3.34
5	Employees are respected in this institution	3.31

Similarly, Promotion Opportunities ($M = 3.14$) and Job Security ($M = 3.13$) were rated positively. Generally, staff felt that there is a possibility of promotion in their institutions and they felt their jobs are relatively secure. Such perceptions can boost employee motivation and commitment to the organization. The mean scores of the dimensions of Working Conditions ($M = 3.06$) and Work–Family Balance ($M = 3.02$) were comparatively low, but both were still above 3.00, which was the benchmark. This indicates that the employees were somewhat content with the available facilities at work and their ability to manage work and family life. The lower scores are relative to areas where institutional improvements may be beneficial.

The lowest mean score was for Pay and Benefits ($M = 2.92$) which is below the criterion value of 3.00. This finding suggests that employees feel underpaid, undercompensated and undercompensated regarding their pay, compensation and benefits. The respondents believed that their compensation and benefits were not totally sufficient compared to their expectations and contributions. Hence, the lowest factor of satisfaction with the job was pay and benefits for the respondents.

Table 4.3 shows the top 5 statements of job satisfaction for the respondents. The findings reveal strong positive attitudes among workers towards their school's commitment, inter-worker relationships and respect. The highest mean score ($M = 3.42$) was for the statement "I do my best to help this institution succeed." This implies that employees are highly motivated to try to help the organization reach its goals. This finding is a reflection of high levels of dedication and willingness by employees to put effort into the success of the institution.

The second most popular response was "I am proud to be a part of this institution" ($M = 3.36$), which indicates a high level of pride and belongingness by employees regarding their organization. Such feelings of pride often enhance organizational commitment and reduce employees' intentions to leave their jobs.

Table 4.3: Five Lowest Rated Statements

Rank	Statement	Mean
1	This University is a well-paid institution compared to others	2.79
2	The benefits I get from this institution are very high	2.83
3	My earning gives me a comfortable life	2.88
4	The salary I am paid is very high	2.90
5	This institution is a well-paid institution	2.92

Mean scores for both of the statements "My coworkers cooperate with me" and "I have an effective working relationship with my coworkers" were 3.34. The findings indicate that workers have positive relationship with fellow workers or colleagues in the workplace. Collaborative, positive relationships between staff support a positive culture, communications and achievement of organization goals.

Likewise, the same statement, 'Employees are respected in this institution' was rated with a mean score of 3.31, suggesting that the respondents feel valued and respected within their workplace. Treatment of employees that is respectful is a factor in increased job satisfaction, motivation and organizational loyalty.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The mean score of 3.14 indicated that overall employees were satisfied with their jobs, as shown by the findings of the analysis of job satisfaction dimensions. The results showed that the employees were in positive attitude with respect to most of the components of their work place, but there were variations in the satisfaction of these components.

Organizational Commitment was the highest score on all dimensions, signifying that, the employees were quite committed to their organization, they felt proud of their association with their institutions and were ready to contribute to the success of their organizations. Likewise, Co-worker Relations and Recognition and Respect were rated highly, indicating that workers had positive experiences of supportive relationships with co-workers and felt like they were valued and respected in their institutions. Employees' satisfaction with their job

role, supervisory support, career advancement opportunities, and employment stability were reflected in the favorable results for the dimensions of Nature of Work, Supervision, Promotion Opportunities and Job Security.

Working Conditions and Work–Family Balance were rated comparatively lower, with moderate satisfaction ratings, and are therefore important for further research. Pay and benefits was the lowest rated dimension with a score of less than the criterion value of 3.00. This result indicates that the salary, incentives and benefits were the most important source of concern for employees, as this became the number one concern for respondents.

Because Pay and Benefits was given the lowest rating, University management should review their salary structure, allowances and incentive packages to ensure that they are fair and competitive. Improved financial rewards can significantly enhance employee satisfaction and motivation.

Institutions need to have clear promotion procedures and a formal recognition scheme that encourages people through reward for their skills, contributions and performance. This will raise the level of motivation, commitment and beliefs in organizational fairness. Positive working relationships, family friendly policies, manageable workloads and working conditions should be encouraged in universities. These can help alleviate work–family conflict, boost employee well-being, and increase general job satisfaction.

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