

Job Satisfaction and Women's Turnover Intentions in Pakistan's Public Universities

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to test the impact of women's job satisfaction on their turnover intentions, specifically for those employed in the education sector. Using a sample drawn from two different universities in Lahore, Pakistan, we measure their levels of job satisfaction by evaluating their general working conditions, pay and potential for promotion, professional relationships, use of skills and abilities, and activities assigned. We find that flexible working hours, workplace location, performance appraisal, and skills utilization have a highly positive significance on turnover intentions, while professional autonomy, job security, and promotion have an inverse impact on job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

Keywords: Turnover intentions, job characteristics, job independence, job involvement.

JEL classification: M10, M12, M19

1. Introduction

Job satisfaction, or a feeling of contentment with one's present job, lowers the chances of one's quitting that job. This degree of satisfaction is determined by various factors, such as pay scale, employer's attitude, skill variety, motivation, job security, working environment, task identity, and feedback. O'Reilly (1989) points out that these expectations on the part of an employee produce organizational norms that shape employees' behavior in that organization. High levels of motivation lead to better performance and eventually make the organization more effective (Tietjen & Myers, 1998).

An employee's daily work routine, under favorable working conditions, leads to job satisfaction; many studies have empirically tested this idea. Katz (1978) examines the relationship between job satisfaction and five task characteristics: (i) skill variety, (ii) task identity, (iii) task

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significance, (iv) autonomy, and (v) feedback on performance. The author's results show that each of these characteristics is directly related to job satisfaction.

Our aim is, specifically, to determine the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions among women in public sector universities/colleges in Pakistan. The rest of this article is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a review of the literature, Section 3 explains the methodology used, Section 4 analyzes the data collected, Section 5 presents the results of our statistical analysis, and Section 6 concludes the study.

2. A Review of the Literature

Griffin, Patterson, and West (2001) explore the ways in which overall job satisfaction in teams is influenced by changes in leadership roles. Teamwork involves leadership and employees' experience of supervisory support and encouragement. A team leader's role, therefore, produces outcomes on the part of his or her employees, and is shown to be a strong determinant of job satisfaction. The relationship between employees and their supervisors also plays an important role in retaining the former. Gilstrap (2009) emphasizes the importance of a leader's role in motivating his or her employees with rewards and monetary benefits.

Many other factors lead to work satisfaction, including bonuses, fringe benefits, job enrichment, clarity of roles, and met expectations. Howard (1966) points out the importance of fringe benefits in retaining employees. These benefits can include paid leisure leave, paid sick leave, and health insurance, all of which help develop an employee's bond with the organization.

Khandwalla and Jain (1984) conclude that employee morale, customer loyalty, and customer goodwill can contribute strongly to job satisfaction among lower management. Frameworks developed by Goffee and Jones (1996) and Alvesson (2002) show that motivation exists where employees' values are aligned to the values of their employer organization. Miller and Wheeler (1992) find that gender differences in job satisfaction disappear if employees are satisfied with their jobs. Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois, and Callan (2004) point out that uncertainty among employees can cause emotional stress, lack of motivation, and lower concentration, which in turn leads to poorer job performance. It is, therefore, very important for an employee to feel mentally and physically satisfied with his or her job.

Some employees may be subject to stress if they perceive unfairness on the part of their employer. This can lead to job dissatisfaction and, in turn, cause employees to search for alternative jobs. For example, employees needing to take maternal leave may decide to quit their jobs if their employer does not provide support. Odom, Boxx, and Dunn (1990) investigate the relationship between organizational culture and three elements of employee behavior: (i) commitment, (ii) group work cohesion, and (iii) job satisfaction, all of which are found to be significant with respect to turnover intentions.

Certain aspects of organizational politics can be detrimental to job satisfaction, such as mistrust between employees and their employers, and between coworkers—this results in high turnover in most organizations. Ilgen and Favero (1985) emphasize the usefulness of performance appraisal, which an essential factor for motivating employees and, in turn, leading to low turnover.

It is necessary that an organization retain its employees because it affects the performance of both. In many organizations, an employee's performance is measured by the number of years that he or she has worked. Employees may leave organizations for reasons such as perceived unfair treatment when promotions are not merit-based, or if they are required to carry out work that is against their values. Such instances create frustration and result in employees leaving their jobs.

Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, and Graske (2001) argue that employees who leave their organization create a problem for other employees and for the organization itself. The latter has to bear the extra cost of hiring and training new workers from scratch, while other employees also begin to feel discontent with their jobs.

Organizations may undergo different changes to be successful. Frahm and Brown (2007) examine employees' rate of adaptability to such changes. Lund (2003) shows that there is a positive relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction. Thus, both organizational culture and communication can have a significant impact on an employee's satisfaction level.

Organizations such as educational institutions need to provide their employees with equal, merit-based promotion opportunities. Price and Mueller (1981) find that organizations that provide such opportunities and define employees' working hours face lower turnover intentions.

While there is a body of literature on job satisfaction and turnover intentions—as reviewed above—there is still need for further research because no significant theory has yet clearly identified the job satisfaction factors that lead to voluntary turnover among women. Our aim is to discuss the determinants of job satisfaction and assess how they can reduce turnover intentions. The independent variables used are (i) work satisfaction and (ii) job characteristics. Specifically, we focus on women employees' performance and satisfaction in relation to changes in a university/college setting.

Women employees who feel professionally enriched and are given opportunities to advance in their institution are more likely to be retained by it. Age, wage level, tenure, and recognition of accomplishments also play an important part in contributing to job satisfaction. Thus, organizations that fail to implement the appropriate policies to retain their employees may eventually lose their assets.

3. Methodology

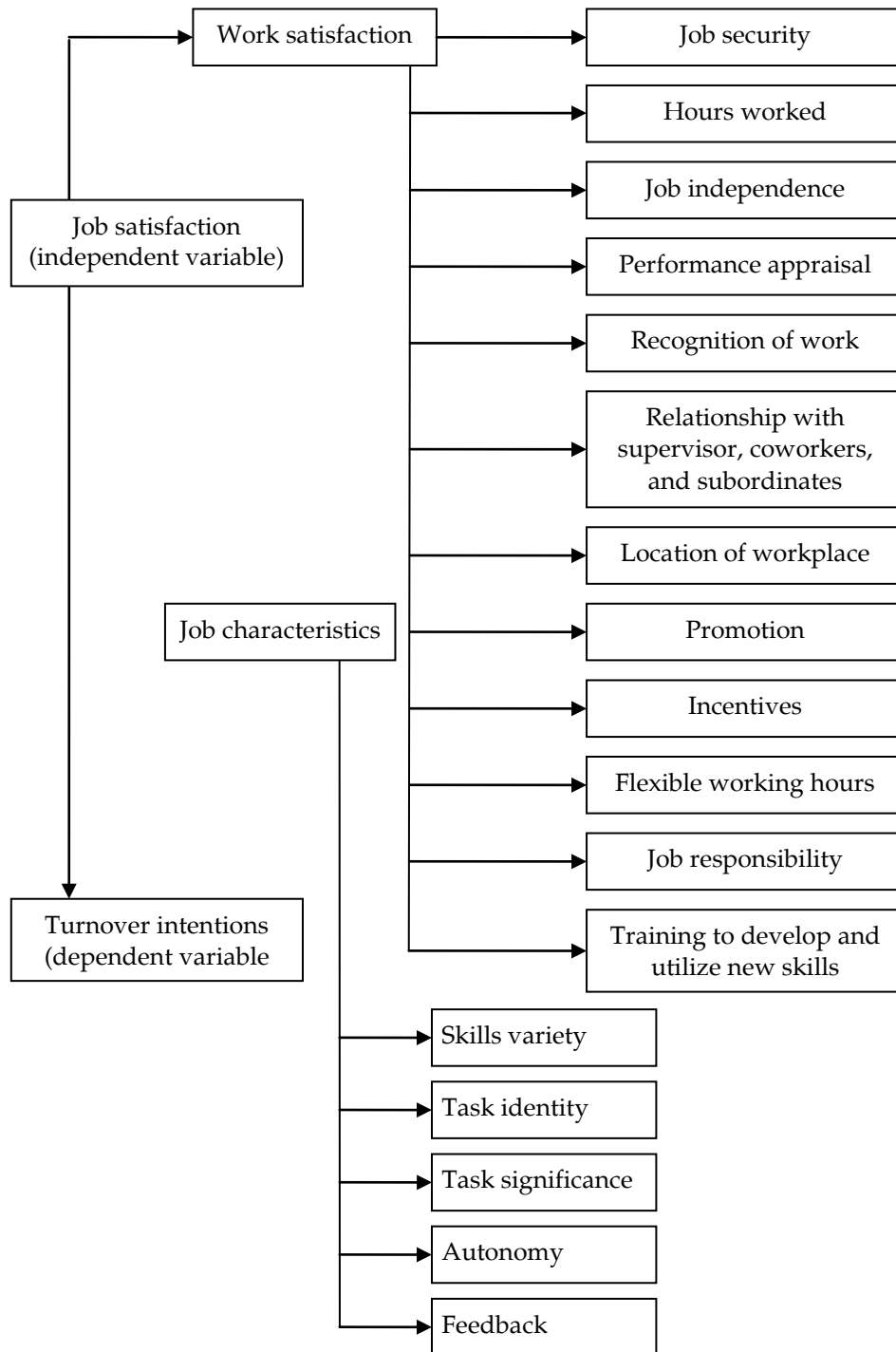
3.1. Objectives

The study's objectives are to determine the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions—among women in public sector universities/colleges—in terms of the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between the factors that affect job satisfaction (working hours, location of workplace, paid leave, incentives, promotion, performance appraisal, recognition of work or task significance, relationship with colleagues (supervisors, coworkers, and subordinates), autonomy, responsibilities (task identity/job involvement), skill variety, job security, and turnover intentions)?
2. What is the relationship between the linear combination of these factors (as identified above)?

Figure 1 illustrates our theoretical framework of job satisfaction, which is further divided into (i) work satisfaction characteristics, and (ii) job characteristics, with respect to turnover intentions.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework of job satisfaction



3.2. Data Sample and Variables

Our sample population for the study was drawn from among the faculty of two women's colleges in Lahore, Pakistan—Kinnaird College and Lahore College. Of a total of 750 faculty members, we selected 100 respondents, including lecturers, assistant/associate professors, and heads of departments. Fifty questionnaires each were distributed between the two colleges, to collect data on the variables shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Categories of study variables

Work satisfaction characteristics:	
Level of satisfaction with	Job characteristics
Salary and bonuses	Skills variety (new skills)
Promotion	Task significance (skill utilization)
Job security	Task identity (recognition)
Location of workplace	Autonomy
Working conditions: Flexible hours	Feedback (performance appraisal)
Working conditions: Paid leave	
Working conditions: Hours worked	
Utilization of skills	
Training and learning new skills	
Supervisor	
Coworkers	
Subordinates	
Recognition of work	
Job responsibility	
Performance appraisal	

3.3. Instrumentation

We have used a structured questionnaire comprising a combination of instruments to collect the data required. All the instruments used were developed specifically to test the impact of job satisfaction on turnover intentions, and their reliability has been confirmed by a number of studies (see Kanungo, 1982; Lin, 1999; Hung & Tsai, 2008). Table 2 presents the four-item scale used by Kelloway, Gottlieb, and Barham (1999) to measure turnover intentions as a dependent variable.

Table 2: Turnover intentions as dependent variable

Questions	Four-item scale
I am thinking about leaving this organization	Measured by Likert five-point scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
I am planning to look for a new job	As above
I intend to ask others about new job opportunities	As above
I do not plan to stay with this organization much longer	As above

The independent and dependent variables were combined into one comprehensive questionnaire for participants to complete. The questionnaire is based on the Likert five-point scale, which measures both the high and low dimensions of all the variables (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). It consists of two sections: (i) turnover intentions (dependent variable), and (ii) job satisfaction (independent variable), which is further subdivided into (a) work satisfaction characteristics, and (b) job characteristics. Table 3 describes the independent variables used.

Table 3: Definitions of independent variables

Independent variable:		
Level of satisfaction with	Constitutive definition	Operational definition
Work satisfaction characteristics	Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Leung, 1996)	12-item scale
Incentives (salary and bonuses)	Amount of financial remuneration received	Measured by Likert five-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree
Promotion	Satisfaction with career advancement	As above
Job security	Expectations of job continuity	As above
Training and learning new skills	Satisfaction with on-the-job and other training and learning new skills	As above
Location of workplace	Satisfaction with location of university relative to place of residence	As above
Working conditions: Flexible hours	Satisfaction with flexibility of working hours	As above

Independent variable: Level of satisfaction with	Constitutive definition	Operational definition
Working conditions: Paid leave	Satisfaction with paid leave	As above
Working conditions: Hours worked	Satisfaction with average number of hours worked per day	As above
Utilization of skills	Satisfaction with skill utilization in present job	As above
Supervisor	Relationship with supervisor has an impact on job satisfaction	As above
Coworkers	Relationship with coworkers has an impact on job satisfaction	As above
Subordinates	Relationship with subordinates has an impact on job satisfaction	As above
Recognition of work	Satisfaction with appreciation shown and rewards for good work	As above
Job responsibility	Satisfaction with tasks performed and accomplishment of tasks	As above
Performance appraisal	Satisfaction with own evaluation	As above
Job characteristics	Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975)	Five-point scale
Skills variety	Degree to which job involves different activities, or use of different skills/talents in carrying out the work	Mean of items 4, 6, and 8 in Section 3, Part A, of questionnaire Measured by five-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree
Task significance	Degree to which job has substantial impact on the lives or work of others	Mean of items 2, 10, and 15 in Section 3, Part A, of questionnaire Measured by five-point as above

Independent variable: Level of satisfaction with	Constitutive definition	Operational definition
Task identity	Degree to which job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work with visible results	Mean of items 3, 7, and 13 in Section 3, Part A, of questionnaire Measured by five-point as above
Autonomy	Degree to which job provides freedom, independence, and self-discretion in scheduling work and determining which procedures to use	Mean of items 1, 11, and 14 in Section 3, Part A, of questionnaire Measured by five-point as above
Feedback	Degree to which employee receives clear information about his/her performance from supervisor/coworkers	Mean of items 5, 9, and 12 in Section 3, Part A, of questionnaire

4. Data Analysis

Using EViews and SPSS software, we apply the t-test to determine the difference between the mean of the independent variable and that of the dependent variable. A series of ANOVA tests is run to verify the study's hypothesis, where the alpha term represents a 0.01 (extremely significant) and 0.05 (highly significant) level of significance. We carry out multiple linear regressions to compute the significance of the factors affecting job satisfaction and turnover intentions. In the following analysis, the coefficient of determination, R^2 (adjusted R^2), explains data variations caused by turnover intentions. The most significant independent variable is easily identified as the p-value gives the same results as above when compared with the significance level.

Model 1 is written as

$$\begin{aligned}
 TI_t = & \beta_0 + \beta_{1t}LWP + \beta_{2t}PV_t + \beta_{3t}FLXT_t + \beta_{4t}ISB_t + \beta_{5t}PRM_t + \\
 & \beta_{6t}PMAP_t + \beta_{7t}JS_t + \beta_{8t}RW_t + \beta_{9t}RSWSCS_t + \beta_{10t}NJT_t + \beta_{11t}SU_t + \\
 & \beta_{12t}JI_t + \beta_{13t}JR_t + \beta_{14t}HW_t + \varepsilon
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{1}$$

TI_t is turnover intention at time t ; LWP is workplace location; PV is paid leave; $FLXT$ is flexible working hours; ISB is incentives such as salary and bonuses; PRM is promotion; $PMAP$ is performance appraisal; JS is job security; RW is recognition of work; $RSWSCS$ is employees' relationship with their supervisors, coworkers, and subordinates; NJT is

on-the-job training; *SU* is skill utilization; *JI* is job independence; *JR* is job responsibility; and *HW* is the number of hours worked at time t . β_0 and ε represent the constant and error term, respectively.

Model 2 is written as

$$TI_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LWP + \beta_2 FLXT_t + \beta_3 ISB_t + \beta_4 PRM_t + \beta_5 PMAP_t + \beta_6 JS_t + \beta_7 RW_t + \beta_8 RSWSCS_t + \beta_9 NJT_t + \beta_{10} SU_t + \beta_{11} JI_t + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

TI_t is turnover intention at time t ; *LWP* is workplace location; *FLXT* is flexible working hours; *ISB* is incentives such as salary and bonuses; *PRM* is promotion; *PMAP* is performance appraisal; *JS* is job security; *RW* is recognition of work; *RSWSCS* is employees' relationship with their supervisors, coworkers, and subordinates; *NJT* is on-the-job training; *SU* is skill utilization; and *JI* is job independence at time t . β_0 and ε represent the constant and error term, respectively.

Model 3 is written as

$$TI_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LWP + \beta_2 FLXT_t + \beta_3 PRM_t + \beta_4 PMAP_t + \beta_5 JS_t + \beta_6 NJT_t + \beta_7 SU_t + \beta_8 JI_t + \varepsilon \quad (3)$$

TI_t is turnover intention at time t ; *LWP* is workplace location; *FLXT* is flexible working hours; *PRM* is promotion; *PMAP* is performance appraisal; *JS* is job security; *NJT* is on-the-job training; *SU* is skill utilization; and *JI* is job independence at time t . β_0 and ε represent the constant and error term, respectively.

5. Results of Analysis

The results tabulated in Tables 4, 5, and 6 correspond to Models 1, 2, and 3, respectively, and are somewhat consistent with the findings reported in the existing literature. In line with Ilgen and Favero's (1985) findings, our results show that the factors affecting job satisfaction—number of hours worked, location of workplace, paid leave, financial incentives, promotion, performance appraisal, recognition of work, relationship with supervisors/coworkers/subordinates, job independence, level of responsibility, and job security—have a positive and significant relationship with turnover intentions. We also find that flexible working hours have a positive and significant impact on turnover intentions, which is consistent with Griffin et al. (2005).

As Table 4 shows, a faculty member who feels that her job is secure will have increased job satisfaction. While job responsibility is not found to be significant, job security is highly significant. Women faculty members feel more job-secure when they are promoted, given positive feedback, or if their institution is relatively near their residence.

Table 4: Regression results for Model 1

	β_0	β_t	$t(\beta)$	Adj. R ²
β_0	0.162		0.798	
LWP	0.155	0.216	0.016**	
PV	-0.041	-0.04	0.664	
FLXT	0.233	0.301	0.001***	
ISB	0.009	0.009	0.922	
PRM	-0.209	-0.209	0.184	
PMAP	0.508	0.643	0.000***	0.392
JS	-0.194	-0.247	0.076	
RW	-0.126	-0.149	0.372	
RSWSCS	-0.033	-0.027	0.758	
NJT	0.139	0.156	0.233	
SU	0.453	0.408	0.000***	
JI	-0.314	-0.316	0.008***	
JR	-0.099	-0.079	0.406	
HW	0.131	0.179	0.067	

Note: ** = significant at 95 percent, *** = significant at 99 percent.

ANOVA results for Model 1

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Regression	32.119	14	2.294	5.565	0.000
Residual	35.041	85	0.412		
Total	67.160	99			

Source: Author's calculations.

Job satisfaction has a negative and insignificant relationship with the paid-leave variable, which is not consistent with studies such as that of Katz (1978). This may be because faculty members at the sample institutions—Kinnaird College and Lahore College—face a low probability of having applications for paid leave approved; even when

such applications are approved, faculty members may still be required to attend official meetings.

The results also show that workplace location is an important consideration for women faculty members who are married and/or have domestic responsibilities. Osterioh and Frey (2000) similarly suggest that there is positive and extremely significant relationship between workplace location and job performance and motivation.

While Roberson (1990) finds that the time spent at a workplace is positively correlated with satisfaction, our results give a different picture with regard to women faculty members. We find that they prefer shorter working hours that allow them to meet any domestic/family-related responsibilities. Additionally, Hung and Tsai's (2008) findings on the relationship between turnover intentions and supervision are also inconsistent with the results yielded by our sample, where the relationship between supervisors/coworkers/subordinates appears to be insignificant (Tables 4, 5, and 6).

The variations explained by Model 1—39.2 percent as the adjusted R^2 —show that the job satisfaction variables are well explained by their dependent variable, i.e., turnover intentions. Skill utilization, performance appraisal, and flexible working hours have an extremely positive significance for turnover intentions. This result is consistent with Price and Mueller (1981) who find that positive feedback motivates employees to adapt to change and to learn new skills.

We have already noted that women faculty members who need to manage their careers along with domestic/family-related responsibilities prefer flexible working hours. Most of the women in our sample are married, implying that, for them, flexible hours result in higher job satisfaction and, consequently, lower turnover intentions. Moreover, skill utilization has a positive significance for the dependent variable since the more an employee is able to utilize her skills, the more she is likely to be satisfied with her job. This will eventually better her job performance, a result that is supported by Katz (1978), Ilgen and Favero (1985), and Alvesson (2002).

Table 5: Regression results for Model 2

	β_0	β_t	$t(\beta)$	Adj. R ²
β_0	0.186		0.731	
LWP	0.142	0.198	0.025**	
FLXT	0.258	0.333	0.000***	
ISB	0.018	0.016	0.845	
PRM	-0.319	-0.318	0.020**	
PMAP	0.528	0.669	0.000***	0.415
JS	-0.237	-0.302	0.017**	
RW	-0.126	-0.062	0.365	
RSWSCS	-0.039	-0.031	0.714	
NJT	0.157	0.175	0.115	
SU	0.409	0.369	0.000***	
JI	-0.351	-0.353	0.002***	

Note: ** = significant at 95 percent, *** = significant at 99 percent.

ANOVA results for Model 2

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Regression	31.417	8	3.491	8.790	0.000
Residual	35.743	91	0.397		
Total	67.160	99			

Source: Author's calculations.

As Tables 5 and 6 show, the variable *JI*, job independence, is extremely significant but has an inverse relationship with turnover intentions. This result is different from that of studies such as Khandwalla and Jain (1984), who find that task significance and job independence decrease turnover intentions. According to our results, job independence increases job satisfaction but does not decrease turnover intentions since it has a negative slope.

This relationship could be explained by the fact that the women faculty members in our sample are required to follow a given course structure and not given the independence to include/exclude topics of their interest. This repetitive structure may increase boredom and eventually de-motivate an employee, giving her reason to leave her job. As Model 3 (Table 6) shows, an R² value of 41.5 percent indicates that turnover intentions are well explained by the independent variables we have used.

Table 6: Regression results for Model 3

	β_0	β_t	$t(\beta)$	Adj. R ²
β_0	0.211		0.687	
LWP	0.144	0.201	0.021**	
FLXT	0.259	0.333	0.000***	
PRM	-0.321	-0.320	0.018**	
PMAP	0.532	0.673	0.000***	0.415
JS	-0.237	-0.301	0.017**	
NJT	0.157	0.175	0.114	
SU	0.408	0.367	0.000***	
JI	-0.349	-0.351	0.002***	

Note: ** = significant at 95 percent, *** = significant at 99 percent.

ANOVA results for Model 3

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Regression	31.042	8	3.880	9.776	0.000
Residual	36.118	91	0.397		
Total	67.160	99			

Source: Author's calculations.

Fisher (2000) concludes that employees who are allowed to work independently are more productive, leading to greater job satisfaction. Our findings, however, are different because the employees in our sample are not able to work independently and are required to coordinate their work with other faculty members who teach the same courses. When their institution's administration gives this authority to its faculty members, they are likely to relax their productivity, while absenteeism increases. This, in turn, eventually decreases employees' productivity to the point that the rate of turnover rises.

While Lindbeck and Snower (1988) greatly stress the significance of paid leave and job satisfaction for turnover intentions, our study finds that paid leave and turnover intentions have an insignificant relationship since the former is not often approved. Further, the number of hours worked, job responsibility, recognition of work, and salary and bonus incentives do not appear to have a significant impact on employee retention.

The promotions variable and positive feedback variable are both shown to have a significant impact on turnover intentions. The relationship is an inverse one, indicating that the more women employees are given chances for promotion, the more they are satisfied with their current jobs, and the less likely are they to leave. Job security also has a highly significant negative impact on turnover intentions, and helps retain employees in that women faculty members who are assured job security report lower turnover intentions. Gilstrap (2009) and Mitchell et al. (2001) give similar results but using a different sample size. The expected signs of these variables are, therefore, consistent with the findings of the existing literature.

6. Conclusion

The study's aim was to assess the impact of different factors of job satisfaction on women employees' turnover intentions in public sector universities in Pakistan. We have found that flexible working hours, workplace location, performance appraisal, and skill utilization help determine these employees' level of job satisfaction and, in turn, their turnover intentions. This can be explained by the argument that many women employees have to manage domestic responsibilities along with their careers, which the teaching profession allows them to do. The factors mentioned above increase employees' satisfaction and give them incentive to retain their posts at the employing university.

While most faculty members possess a level of competence that matches their ability to work independently, our study has shown that there can also be an inverse relationship between the two. Most women faculty members in the sample institutions are not authorized to frame new syllabi or teach new topics, but instead are required to comply with specific course outlines, all of which decrease their satisfaction level. The lack of independence to include or exclude topics of their interest eventually demotivates such employees and leads them to leave the institution.

Skill utilization has a highly significant impact on turnover intentions since it gives employees a better chance to enhance their selves. Performance appraisal is also extremely significant as a factor of job satisfaction. University administrations must focus on these variables to reduce turnover among their women faculty members, and to avoid the consequent loss of experience, knowledge, and motivation among other faculty members.

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