

Structural Equation Model for Determinants of Labor Quits in Manufacturing Organizations

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: This study invokes the need to prioritize the issues of non-executive workers, whose wellbeing is overlooked by organizations and researchers. The study aimed to measure the factors influencing the turnover intention of employees, and examine how turnover intention influences employee turnover at manufacturing organizations.

Methodology: This study is cross-sectional, and a closed-ended questionnaire was used for collecting data that comprised 36 items about nine variables/constructs. The sample of the study consists of 342 workers from 12 mills—from four different industries—situated at Site Area Kotri, Pakistan.

Key Findings: There were eight hypotheses developed for the study, except for H7, all seven were supported. A comprehensive model has been developed that contains seven determinants of employee turnover intention and a relationship between turnover intention and employee turnover. The structural model has fulfilled the requirement of achieving accepted values of fit indexes, and all the paths have positive beta coefficients.

Conclusion: Insecure jobs were found to be the main determinant of turnover intention in manufacturing organizations, followed by alternate job opportunities and poor reward and benefits. Management of manufacturing organizations needs to devise policies for job security of employees along with improvements in the reward and benefit systems, thereby ensuring that their employees will not divert toward alternate jobs. The findings urge the management to improve the factors responsible for turnover, which will help reduce the quits.

Keywords: Quits, Causes, Manufacturer, Industry, Structural Equation Model.

Introduction

Pakistan abounds in natural resources, and it is known as an agrarian economy. Whereas, it has the forty-first rank in the industrial race. Site area Kotri is the hub of manufacturing organizations in the Sindh province of Pakistan. There are 136 small- to large scale concerns situated at Site Area Kotri, which have their membership in the Kotri Association of Trade and Industry (KATI). The site is the second-largest

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industrial area in the province (Kotri Association of Trade and Industry, 2020). Manufacturing organizations located in the Site area Kotri cater to residents of various districts in Sindh province of Pakistan by providing job opportunities in large numbers; even residents of other provinces work there. Thus, it is considered a hub of employment. However, there has been a dearth of studies pertaining to the difficulties and problems of industrial units in Site area Kotri.

There are various factors deemed crucial in measuring organizational performance and prospects, and employee turnover is one of them. Turnover was viewed as the filling of a vacancy each time an employee leaves, be it voluntary or involuntary (Woods, 1992). The cycle of replacement is called "turnover," though frequent turnover denotes uncertainty in the livelihood of a nation's workforce. There has been an abundance of literature about the causes, reasons, and determinants of employee turnover, however, this study particularly focused on turnover intention and its typical determinants in manufacturing organizations.

Employee turnover was observed as detrimental for manufacturing organizations and has devastating consequences for organizations, therefore, there is a dire need for identifying the reasons and correcting them. (Long et al., 2012; Makhdoom et al., 2020; Makhdoom, 2018b). Owing to the importance of turnover, Peter et al. (2003) concentrated on the turnover of non-executives/operatives. According to Khatri et al. (2001), employee turnover remains a thorny issue for human resource managers in organizations. Bluedorn (1978) distinguished between voluntary and involuntary turnover based on its initiation, as the former is initiated by employees themselves, while the latter takes place because of any factor other than the employees' initiation. In this study, the term 'turnover' denotes only voluntary exits. Employees' willingness or plan to leave an organization was termed "turnover intention," whereas employees' deliberate exit from an organization was termed "employee turnover"—it does not include retirement and termination of service by the organization.

Literature Review

Researchers have identified various factors as determinants and causes of turnover in organizations. While, the focus of this study is on the causes of turnover intention, the relationship between turnover intention and employee turnover was also analyzed.

Hussain and Asif (2012) defined the term 'turnover intention' as employees' attitude towards their job with the readiness to select the choice of leaving as compared to staying and that it is eventually associated directly with actual exits. The terms "intention to leave" and "intention to quit" are also used as synonyms for "turnover intention" in this paper.

Rewards include employee salary/wages and any bonuses they receive for their efforts (Gee & Hanwell, 2014), as well as cash or equivalent that an employee receives from the employer in exchange for his services (Nawaz et al. 2009). Rewards and benefits have been widely linked to motivation and negatively linked to the intention to quit a job, as in the studies (Rana et al., 2009; Jabber and Mesbah-Ud-din, 2014; Pawar and Chakravarthy, 2014). Whereas, Briscoe et al. (2012) stated that people struggle to earn money for the fulfilment of their needs and wants; therefore, employees prefer the employer who pays them well over the employer who pays less.

In the studies of Shami et al. (2015), Farooqui and Ahmed (2013), and Melaku (2014), the strongest effect of rewards and benefits on turnover intention was identified. Similarly, Makhdoom (2017) found that poor reward and benefits have the strongest correlation with the intention to leave an organization while investigating turnover intention in the sugar industry. Likewise, Albaqami (2016) concluded that improvements in the payment system will reduce turnover intention in the teaching faculty of public universities in Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, Kiani et al. (2020) stated that inadequate rewards to employees would develop their intentions to quit their respective organizations. Koo et al. (2020) opined that rewards help reduce employee turnover intention. Similarly, Mustafa and Ali (2019) highlighted that monetary compensation significantly reduces

turnover intentions. According to Rahman and Syahrizal (2019), compensation negatively influences turnover intention. Whereas, Silaban and Syah (2018) argued that employees have a lower intention to quit when they receive higher compensation.

Hence, the following hypothesis has been formulated;

H1: Poor rewards and benefits have a significant and positive effect on employee turnover intentions at manufacturing organizations.

Job security is the reliance or sureness of an employee that he or she will hold onto his or her job. An association between job security and employees' intention to quit the job was asserted by Sokhanvar et al. (2018). Likewise, job security was identified as most influencing factor for employees belong to less developed areas by Makhdoom et al. (2019). Similarly, Tanchi (2015) and Makhdoom (2017) concluded that job security does not have a strong relationship with turnover intention while investigating the turnover intention of employees in the sugar industry. On the contrary, Makhdoom (2018a) identified job security as the second highly affecting factor on turnover intention in the textile industry. Secured employment was positioned as the highest priority for employees by Shamsuzzoha and Shumon (2007). Similarly, Khan and Aleem (2014) and Peter et al. (2003) concluded that job security will help maintain employees' membership in the organization and reduce turnover intention. Likewise, Farooqui and Ahmed (2013) mentioned job security as an influencer for turnover intention.

Hence, the following hypothesis has been formulated;

H2: Job insecurity has a significant and positive effect on employee turnover intention at manufacturing organizations.

Workplace environment denotes the physical surroundings in which employees work and has been immensely emphasized by researchers and industry experts. While evaluating the reasons of labor turnover, Kwame et al. (2017) asserted that poor working conditions are an immensely crucial factor. According to Albaqami (2016), an improved working environment may result in the job satisfaction of employees and reduce turnover intention. Similarly, Pawar and Chakravarthy (2014), Farooqui and Ahmed (2013), and Rana et al. (2009) indicated that working conditions are negatively associated with employees' quits.

Hence, the following hypothesis has been formulated;

H3: Unfavorable workplace environment has a significant and positive effect on employee turnover intention at manufacturing organizations.

Unconducive management style refers to the supervisor's tendency to be unfriendly, inconsiderate, unfair, and less supportive with the subordinates. Researchers argued that bosses have a strong influence on the turnover intentions of employees, as identified by Farooqui and Ahmed (2013). Makhdoom, Shaikh and Baloch (2021) concluded that employees are turned off by the unfavorable behavior of their boss and continue working in an organization under the supervision of a friendly boss. Similarly, Kwame et al. (2017) identified "unfair management treatment" and "lack of proper supervision" as factors that influence employees to quit an organization. Likewise, Shukla and Sinha (2013) and Peter et al. (2003) also emphasized the interrelationship between employees and management. Additionally, Kiani et al. (2020), Shami et al. (2015), and Joarder et al. (2015) opined that supervisory support is significantly and negatively related to the intention to leave. Moen et al. (2017) examined the influence of a particular supervisor's support initiative on turnover intentions. They found that turnover intentions declined as a result of the supervisors' support initiative. Furthermore, Maaitah (2018) argued that there was a statistically significant impact of leadership style on turnover intention. Similarly, Makhdoom and Daas (2022) have emphasized leadership style for analyzing employee job behavior.

Hence, the following hypothesis has been formulated;

H4: Unconducive management style has a significant and positive effect on employee turnover intention at manufacturing organizations.

According to Khatri et al. (2001), alternative job opportunities are the real predictor of turnover intention. Furthermore, Michaels and Spector (1982) concluded that perceived alternative job opportunities do not contribute to the model of turnover as a determinant of turnover intention while testing the turnover model of Mobley et al. which they proposed in 1979. Whereas, Skachkova (2011) opined that alternate job opportunities force employees to leave an organization by describing them as alternate forces among the set of other forces while analyzing voluntary turnover among technical consultants in Sweden. Similarly, Rankin (2006) argued that a high number of employment opportunities may cause high turnover rates, as the highest turnover rates were reported where the unemployment rate was lower. Moreover, Farooqui and Ahmed (2013), Makhdoom (2017), and Makhdoom (2018a) declared alternate job opportunities as a strong influencing factor for employees' intention to quit an organization.

Hence, the following hypothesis has been formulated;

H5: Alternate job opportunities have a significant and positive effect on employee turnover intention at manufacturing organizations.

Apart from the hypotheses developed through viewing literature, we have developed two more hypotheses from the results of sequential interviews conducted as the pilot study for exploring what are the determining factors of turnover intention that are found in the population. The details of the interview are described in the subsequent section.

H6: Unavailability of overtime has a significant and positive effect on employee turnover intention at manufacturing organizations.

H7: Attraction to gratuity withdrawal has a significant and positive effect on employee turnover intention at manufacturing organizations.

In various turnover frameworks, it was investigated that actual turnover tendency can be indicated by employees' intentions to quit (Ramli et al., 2014). Likewise, Perez (2008) and Thirapatsakun et al. (2014) asserted an association between actual exits and the turnover intentions of employees. Hussain and Asif (2012) and several other researchers have stressed the role of turnover intention in predicting the actual exit. Kaur et al. (2013) argued that actual employee turnover increases because of turnover intention.

Hence, the following hypothesis has been formulated;

H8: Turnover intention has a significant and positive effect on employee turnover at manufacturing organizations.

Thus, literature evidences the influence of turnover intention on employee turnover, and there is great emphasis on six other factors as determinants of turnover intention. Whereas two more factors as determinants of turnover intention from interviews were discovered.

Methodology

Research Design

Two techniques were used for primary data collection: interviews were conducted before the main study as a pilot study, and a survey was conducted subsequently using the closed-ended questionnaires as the main study.

As a pilot study, semi-structured and sequential interviews were conducted until the saturation point was met. The convenient sample was composed of 11 senior employees of the manufacturing organizations since saturation with around 11 participants was suggested by Latham (2013). Respondents were asked about the causes of employees' turnover intention in their organization. Their responses were recorded on handwritten notes and translated afterward. Thematic analysis was done for identifying factors and explored six determinants of turnover intention from the results of the themes, namely: reward and benefits, workplace environment, management style, alternate job opportunities, overtime availability, and attraction

to gratuity withdrawal. The first four factors have also been identified from the review of literature, whereas the two factors that were not found in the literature were identified as causes of turnover, namely, overtime unavailability and attraction to gratuity withdrawal. Job insecurity is emphasized in the literature but could not be identified in the themes of interviews.

Measures

A questionnaire was developed for this study rather than adopted, owing to the fact that most of the instruments used by other researchers are about intrinsic factors and more related to managerial staff. The questionnaire was developed with the help of factors identified from interviews in the pilot study. The questionnaire was self-administered and closed-ended, composed of 36 items measuring the nine variables (four items for each variable) on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The instrument contains all five variables identified as determinants in the literature and two variables identified from the results of interviews. Furthermore, turnover intention and employee turnover are also measured by the instrument.

Industry experts reviewed and confirmed the validity of the content in the questionnaires. Moreover, we pilot tested the instrument on a sample of 40 participants for its reliability. All constructs fulfil the criterion of Cronbach's α values above 0.7, as recommended by Hair et al. (2010).

Approximately 25 percent of the respondents were less-educated or uneducated. Therefore, the instrument was also used as a researcher-administered questionnaire whenever needed. Moreover, to make it comprehensible for participants, it was translated into Urdu.

To ascertain the validity of the scales, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were performed. Two items, one measuring alternate job opportunities and one measuring overtime unavailability, were deleted with low factor loadings, and the scales achieved construct validity (convergent and discriminant validity).

Sampling Method and Size

The simple random sampling technique was used, as done by Rajapaksha (2015) and Ampomah and Cudjor (2015). The sample of this study is composed of existing employees (operative and non-executive workers) of 12 mills from the textile, oil, paper, and flour industries situated in Site Area Kotri, Pakistan. 420 questionnaires were distributed, 361 questionnaires were received, and 19 incomplete questionnaires were discarded. Thus, the valid sample of the study is 342, which is the 81 percent response rate, which is considered good enough by Mohammed et al. (2014). Moreover, the sample size of 325 line probation officers was taken by Lee (2008), and the sample of 352 nurses for investigating the exits was taken by Morrell et al. (2001) in similar kinds of studies.

Conceptual Model

A conceptual model for the study was developed with the factors explored from the literature and the results of the interviews. The model consists of ten variables depicted in Figure 1.

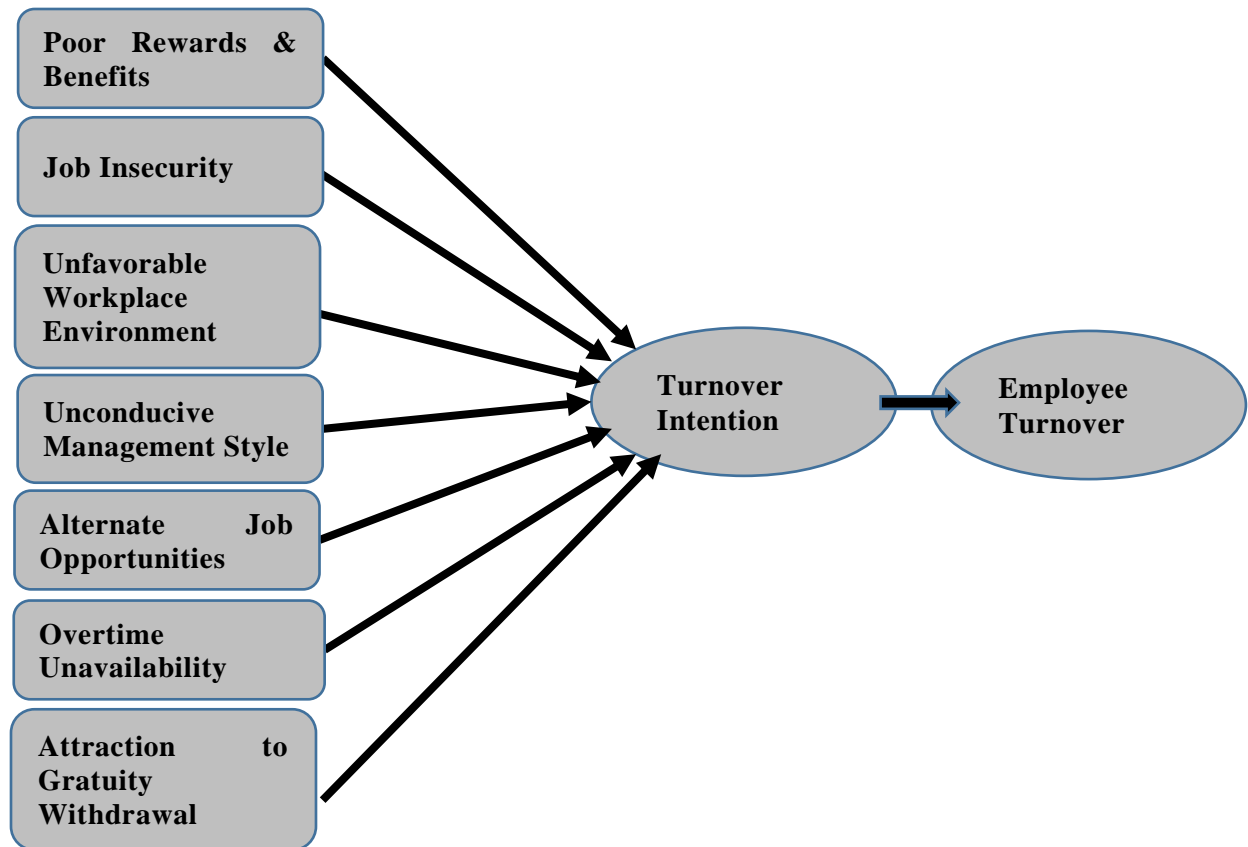


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Data Analysis Techniques

SPSS 24.0, AMOS 24.0, and Microsoft Excel 2013 were used for data analysis. The structural equation model (SEM) was applied to check the effects of all variables in the study, and the observed scores and the modelled connections were compared. While analyzing employee turnover, Rajapaksha (2015) also applied structural equation models for determining the reliability of the data and ascertaining the model fit.

Results

The proposed structural equation model for this study is presented with standardized regression weights/Beta coefficients in Figure 2.

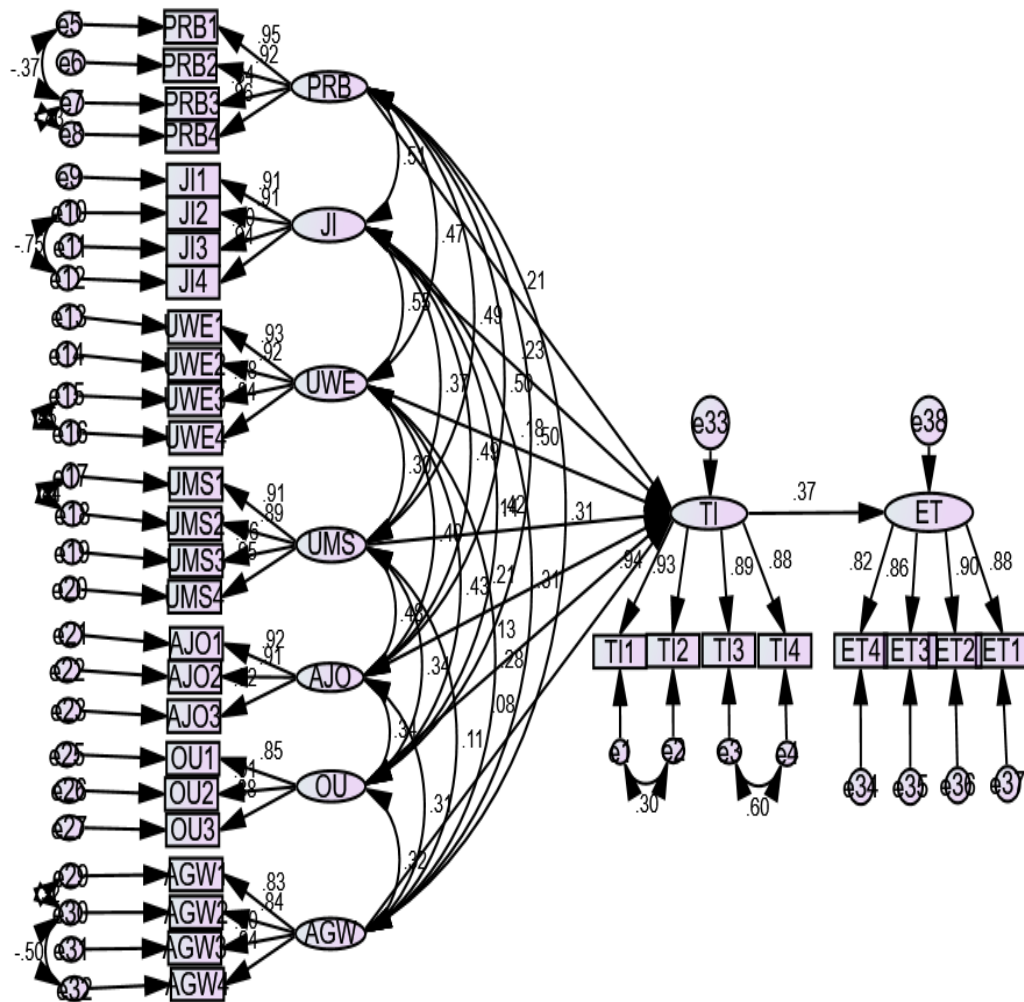


Figure 2. The Structural model for Determinants of Employee Turnover

The overall model was evaluated to confirm that the entire set of causal relationships is satisfactorily represented by the model before assessing the structural model in Table 1.

Table 1. *Fit Indexes of Structural Model (n=342)*

| Factors | Values | Factors | Values |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| CMIN/DF | 1.71 | P-Value | 0.00 |
| AGFI | 0.85 | GFI | 0.87 |
| NFI | 0.94 | TLI | 0.97 |
| CFI | 0.97 | RMSEA | 0.04 |

Table 1 depicts that an excellent fit for CMIN/DF = 1.71 was achieved. Moreover, the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) are 0.87 and 0.85, respectively, which are below the required values of > 0.90 and > 0.80, respectively (Scott, 1994). The normalised fit index (NFI) = 0.94 and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.97 are also below the required value of > 0.90 (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.97 has achieved the required value of > 0.90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Finally, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.04 has also been achieved with an excellent fit value greater than 0.05 (Byrne, 2010).

Table 2. *The Values of Standardized Regression Weights (n=342)*

| Structural path | | | Standardized coefficient | p-Value |
|-----------------|------|-----|--------------------------|---------|
| TI | <--- | PRB | .214 | *** |
| TI | <--- | JI | .226 | *** |
| TI | <--- | UWE | .184 | *** |
| TI | <--- | UMS | .137 | *** |
| TI | <--- | AJO | .214 | *** |
| TI | <--- | OU | .127 | *** |
| TI | <--- | AGW | .083 | .025 |
| ET | <--- | TI | .366 | *** |

*** $p \leq .01$

Note. TI=Turnover Intention, PRB=Poor rewards & benefits, JI=Job insecurity, UWE=Unfavorable workplace environment, UMS=Unconducive management style, AJO=Alternate job opportunities, OU=Overtime unavailability, AGW=Attraction to gratuity withdrawal, ET=Employee turnover

Table 2 indicates that the beta weights that represent the standardized coefficients reveal the relative strength of the relationship between all variables. All the independent variables have significant and positive effects on turnover intention except attraction to gratuity withdrawal; poor rewards and benefits have a significant positive effect ($\beta=.214$; $p<.01$), job insecurity has a significant positive effect ($\beta=.226$; $p<.01$), the unfavorable workplace environment has a significant positive effect ($\beta=.184$; $p<.01$), unconducive management style has a significant positive effect ($\beta=.137$; $p<.01$), alternate job opportunities have a significant positive effect ($\beta=.214$; $p<.01$), overtime unavailability has a significant positive effect ($\beta=.127$; $p<.01$), whereas attraction to gratuity withdrawal does not have a significant positive effect ($\beta=.083$; $p>.01$). Results also show that turnover intention has a significant and positive effect on employee turnover ($\beta=.366$; $p .01$), where employee turnover is a dependent variable to turnover intention.

Discussion

All the factors suggested by the literature and the factors identified from the results of interviews were found to fit in the model. Only the attraction to gratuity withdrawal was found to be insignificant and had a very low effect on turnover intention. As this variable was identified only from interviews, it could not be found to be a significant factor as a cause of turnover intention in the main study.

The most affecting factor is job insecurity, followed by alternate job opportunities and poor rewards and benefits. The results are similar to the proposition of Shamsuzzoha and Shumon (2007), who placed job security as the highest priority for employees and identified it as one of the main reasons for employees to remain in organizations. Job security was also greatly emphasized by Khan and Aleem (2014), Makhdoom (2018a), and Peter et al. (2003).

Contradicting the findings of Khatri et al. (2001) and Michaels and Spector (1982), which did not find alternate job opportunities as a strong indicator, this study found them to be an influencer for quitting an existing job. Whereas, the results affirm the propositions of Skachkova (2011), Rankin (2006), Makhdoom (2017), Makhdoom (2018a), and Farooqui and Ahmed (2013).

The significant effect of poor rewards and benefits is consistent with the findings of Rana et al. (2009), Shami et al. (2015), Kwame et al. (2017) and Pawar and Chakravarthy (2014).

Unfavorable workplace environment was found to be an affecting factor, which is consistent with the findings of Kwame et al. (2017), Albaqami (2016), Farooqui and Ahmed (2013), Pawar and Chakravarthy (2014), and Rana et al. (2009).

Unconducive management style also has a significant positive effect on turnover intention, which is consistent with the findings of Peter et al. (2003), Farooqui and Ahmed (2013), Shukla and Sinha (2013), and Kwame et al. (2017).

Overtime unavailability was also found to be a determinant of turnover intention, but it is the least influential among the other significant factors. Moreover, there was a significant and positive effect of turnover intention on employee turnover, affirming the propositions of Ramli et al. (2014), Perez (2008), and Thirapatsakun et al. (2014).

This study will contribute a valuable insight into the literature about employee turnover. The study will help management realize that job security, rewards and benefits, workplace environment, management style, and overtime availability are serious concerns for employees that make them leave an organization.

Conclusions

This study measured the determinants of employee turnover intention with empirical evidence. The structural model has fulfilled the requirement of achieving accepted values of fit indexes along with positive beta coefficients for all the paths. The set of proposed hypotheses was tested on the basis of empirical and theoretical connections among different variables. Hypotheses were tested on the basis of the standardized beta coefficient in the structural model. Except for H7, all seven hypotheses were supported. Job security was found to be the most influential factor, followed by reward and benefits and alternate job opportunities. Workplace environment and management styles were also moderately influencing factors for leaving an organization. Furthermore, seeing the significant relation between turnover intention and employee turnover, it is inferred that turnover intention results in employee turnover if factors are not improved or controlled. A comprehensive model for determinants of employee turnover has been proposed, which would give managers a guiding path for decision-making and researchers a new insight into empirical work on employee turnover.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There is a limitation in terms of factors or variables. Since the eight variables identified as determinants of turnover intention were only extrinsic factors, intrinsic factors were not analyzed as determinants of turnover intention. Moreover, causal connections among the variables cannot be established because the study was cross-sectional, which involves data collection only at a single time.

Since there is no healthy research culture in Pakistan, people hesitate to participate, and surveys are unusual. The sample of the study was composed of a large number of less-educated or uneducated employees; therefore, the study suffered from less cooperation and may be affected by the inadequate responses of respondents due to their less understanding of terms and conditions.

A more comprehensive study on employees belonging to other industrial areas with a larger sample is suggested. Furthermore, a longitudinal study using the actual turnover from official records of organizations will give a more vivid picture of employee turnover.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors have no conflict of interest.


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