

The impact of job satisfaction on the employees turnover intention at public universities (Northern Border University)



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 3 September 2020

Received in revised form

13 December 2020

Accepted 18 January 2021

Keywords:

Job satisfaction

Turnover

Northern border university

Work motivation

Work quality

Workforce environment

Working conditions

Incentive programs

ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction has been one of the tops extensively studied central elements of the organization in terms of organizational success. In the present study, the primary objective is to examine job satisfaction in the context of the non-academic (administrative staff) in Northern Border University (NBU) in Saudi Arabia, measured through their level of job satisfaction. The study focuses on the turnover amongst the employees in an attempt to develop an incentive initiative via increased remuneration. Based on the findings, administrative staff job satisfaction level was high and such level was influenced by gender, with male staff members being more satisfied than their female counterparts. The findings also showed that staff with shorter tenure had higher levels of job satisfaction than long-tenured staff. The same higher job satisfaction held true for those with lower qualifications and job levels, in comparison to those with high qualifications and job levels.

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1. Introduction

The pioneering author that proposed the term of job satisfaction was [Abubakar et al. \(2018\)](#) who referred to it as the psychological and physiological aspects of the satisfaction of employees with their workplace environment in a way that such satisfaction represents the subjective responses of the employees to their working environment. On the basis of such definition, organizational behavior and sociology studies proposed their ([Ahn and Chaoyu, 2019](#)). [Aktar and Pangil \(2018\)](#) studied that employed survey data to examine nursing students recruited via two universities in Australia. According to their findings, there were two identified job satisfaction sub-scales, namely work environment satisfaction and work hours and wages satisfaction. The authors found that work preparation satisfaction had a significant and positive relationship with both satisfaction sub-scales, but only work environment satisfaction had a significant relationship with job stay expectations. Meanwhile, in the context of nursing [Al-Maaitah et al. \(2015\)](#)

revealed that perceived person-organization fit was a top predictor of general satisfaction.

Moreover, [Berberoglu \(2018\)](#) adopted the HLM method in their investigation to the effect of individual self-efficacy and group cohesion and gender diversity on satisfaction level in a simultaneous manner. They showed that HLM indicated a direct and positive influence of self-efficacy on individual satisfaction, while a cross-level effect of group cohesion and gender diversity was noted on job satisfaction. Also, work hour congruence was revealed to have a significant and positive influence on satisfaction in Byron, [Dirar et al. \(2019\)](#) studied highlighting a distinction between employees inclined towards working more hours and those inclined towards working fewer hours—the former was related to positive job satisfaction changes, while the latter was related to mitigated absenteeism. In the context of universities, [Hussain and Xian \(2019\)](#) examined wage, promotion criteria, working conditions, colleagues, promotion, and school policy, whereas in [Kafashpoor et al. \(2014\)](#) the author suggested that ingratiation comprising of leadership, self-perception, and colleagues were factors that influence job satisfaction of employees.

More to modern enterprises, [Karan and Rahman \(2014\)](#) revealed that employees that have higher job satisfaction levels often displayed lower turnover rates. Other empirical studies like [Karimi and Rahimi \(2020\)](#) revealed that job satisfaction has a negative

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<https://doi.org/10.21833/ijaas.2021.05.006>

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effect on the intention towards turnover among employees. Similarly, a significant relationship between job satisfaction and identification and turnover intention of organization was revealed by [Lu et al. \(2017\)](#) in their study involving 383 construction-enterprises. [Maaitah et al. \(2018\)](#) reported that lower job burnout and turnover intention may be attributed to higher job satisfaction levels. [Romeo et al. \(2020\)](#) on the other hand, examined individual perceptions among knowledge workers and found their satisfaction levels to adversely influence their turnover intention.

Other studies in the same line, [Sharma \(2018\)](#) revealed that early-career employees' job satisfaction had a significant effect on the employees' turnover intention. In particular, the early-career stage refers to the stage of the person's career characterized by the organization of the employee and his gradual acceptance in the workplace. Such stage is related to aggressive and positive but impulsive behavior with high aims, independent working and reluctance to adhere to regulations and instructions, insufficient experience, unstable career anchors, and quick decisions to leave. This puts them in a professionalizing position process, where they face conflict with the environment, internal employees, and other individuals—issues that need to be timely and effectively resolved so as not to bring about employee dissatisfaction as they may culminate in turnover ([Tett and Meyer, 1993](#)).

In the nursing context, [Turan \(2015\)](#) reported that turnover intention was negatively affected by the level of job satisfaction. Similarly, [Van der Heijden et al. \(2018\)](#) studied 101 high-tech enterprises involving questionnaire survey distributed to employees revealed that higher trust of top management was related to lower turnover intention of employees. Also, the turnover tendency in the post-80s only child generation was more evident compared to non-only-child counterparts as revealed by the findings of [Velmurugan and Sankar \(2017\)](#). While early-career employees hold a significant status in the business for vital, healthy, and steady development, voluntary turnover of such employees can lead to increased costs stemming from training and replacement of workforce, and eventually mitigating the enterprise's efficiency. Despite the fact that scholars have delved into the influencing factors of Chinese employees' job satisfaction from various viewpoints, the factors that influence early-career employees' satisfaction, have been under-studied. Moreover, owing to the industry effect, the culture of the enterprise as well as other influencing factors, a unified view of the relationship between early-career employees' level of job satisfaction and turnover intention is still elusive. This issue can be resolved by adopting a systematic study of early-career employees in other industries.

In the current times, employees who are characterized as post-1980s and 1990s generation have permeated the history of employment stage and become the primary force in businesses, aged between 18 and 35 years old. Based on career

theory, they are in the early career stage. Comparatively, Generation Y in the West possesses a more diversified career ideal, high mobility, inclination towards challenging work and more focused on work-life balance ([Yousaf et al., 2018](#)).

This Generation Y characteristic is a challenge to the present management model. On the other end of the spectrum, the eradication of the demographic dividend and the acceleration of the population aging in China has brought about the historical turning point in the adverse growth of the working-age population ([Eleswed and Mohammed, 2013](#)). Hence, this holds significance for enterprises that calls their attention to comprehend the early career employee in order to facilitate their job satisfaction via institutional and management innovation. On the whole, China has a distinct background and early-career employee characteristic that has several implications to studies dedicated to the influencing factors of such employees on their job satisfaction, and the relationship between their job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Therefore, to facilitate the representativeness of the sample, [Aktar and Pangil \(2018\)](#) studied chose early-career employees who are engaged in communication, services, financial services, petrochemical processing, and manufacturing enterprises. The author focused on job satisfaction and employed exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, developing an SEM model of job satisfaction and turnover intention to examine the job satisfaction effect on turnover intention. The issue of employee turnover from a specific view has been the focus of studies since the 1970s, with scholars stressing the relationship between turnover intention and predictive variables. Generally, the authors found that job satisfaction, organizational trust, managerial support, and organizational justice are predictors of turnover intention. For instance, in [Berberoglu's \(2018\)](#) study, emotional quotient was revealed to have a significant positive effect on organizational justice and on turnover intention, while organizational justice mediated the influence of emotional quotient on turnover intention. The significant negative influence of employee job satisfaction on turnover intention was supported by several prior studies in literature all revealed that a higher level of job satisfaction is significantly related to lower levels of turnover intention. In addition, although studies in literature delved into the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, limitations were highlighted, with the first being the focus on the relationship between the two, but not in the context of early-career employees. Thus, the present study focuses on early-career employees as the subjects of the empirical examination directed towards job satisfaction -turnover intention relationship.

2. Literature review and related theories

Throughout the years, there have been intense studies dedicated to job satisfaction ([Hussain and](#)

Xian, 2019), in the field of social and behavioral sciences (Berberoglu, 2018), and in the field of education (Ahn and Chaoyu, 2019). Such studies referred to job satisfaction as the level to which an individual is inclined towards a certain job (Yousaf et al., 2018) and the overall feeling of an individual to the different job aspects (Karimi and Rahimi, 2020). More importantly, there are several thousands of studies dedicated to the job satisfaction topic (Tett and Meyer, 1993) to the extent that more studies have been done on the topic compared to any other variable (Romeo et al., 2020). Such studies focused on examining the antecedent factors of job satisfaction, job satisfaction dimensions, and the relationship between job satisfaction, job performance, and job turnover as job satisfaction can be connected to any job aspect and it plays a key role in the effectiveness of the organization (Van der Heijden et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, studies of this caliber in the education field have confined their focus to teachers' satisfaction and school's superintendents, while the executive level of administrators has been largely ignored when turnover intent is referred to the conscious and deliberate will of any individual to quit the organization (Eleswed and Mohammed, 2013).

Similar to job satisfaction, workers' turnover has occupied a good position in the top focus of leaders and researchers in various disciplines (Turan, 2015), evidenced by the extensive studies and their findings. The phenomenon has been related to different factors including organizational commitment, career commitment, job satisfaction, and intention towards turnover (Yousaf et al., 2018).

According to the findings reported by Abubakar et al. (2018), turnover intent is the final step of withdrawal cognitions and researcher and practitioner circles have attempted to comprehend behind workers job quitting (Aktar and Pangil, 2018). Scholars are particularly focused on shedding light on work-related factors representing a motivated behavior and providing an explanation on a more volitional behavior (Sharma, 2018). In this regard, high levels of turnover may also be related to significant organizational financial costs (Kafashpoor et al., 2014).

In the educational context, studies relating to job satisfaction-teachers and principals' retention associations have been rampant although they have yet to focus on senior executive administrators and superintendents (Maaitah et al., 2018). In consideration of the interaction and relationship among work-related constructs, job satisfaction measures have been evidenced to be the top tool for predicting employee behavior (Velmurugan and Sankar, 2017), as it relates to various other work factors (Karan and Rahman, 2014). Added to this, intention towards turnover has been revealed to negatively affect organizational learning (Lu et al., 2017) perceived support of the organization, and job involvement of employees (Berberoglu, 2018).

Contrastingly, in other studies, a positive relationship was reported between intention towards turnover, role ambiguity (Aktar and Pangil, 2018), and job tension. Prior studies have illustrated the negative relationship between job satisfaction and intention towards turnover (Eleswed and Mohammed, 2013).

Several theories and models on the job satisfaction-turnover relationship have been developed and proposed, with the top among them being Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. The origin of the theory can be traced back to the 1950s when Abraham Maslow provided an outline of the Theory of Needs, contending that a satisfied individual has to have five fundamental needs to be met and they are physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs (Berberoglu, 2018). Furthermore, Maslow further explained the type of needs individually, being that physiological needs encapsulate the need to satisfy hunger, thirst, and fatigue, safety needs encapsulate the need to be physically free from harm, social needs encapsulate the need for love, affecting and a sense of belonging, esteem needs encapsulate the need to be acknowledged and to achieve, and finally, self-actualization needs encapsulate the need for the individual to reach his/her potential in a certain area of expertise. Self-actualized individuals ultimately reach satisfaction by focusing on a certain duty, work form, or mission with the traits serving a higher purpose other than self-satisfaction (Abubakar et al., 2018). Added to the above, the theory argues that needs are in a hierarchical order beginning from the most to least and that workers are satisfied if certain needs are (Yousaf et al., 2018).

The Two Factor Theory proposed by Herzberg is another well-known job satisfaction theory that stresses motivation and higher-order needs within the motivation of the individual in organizations (Dirar et al., 2019). According to Maaitah et al. (2018); there are two main factors that affect the work motivation of an individual and they are hygiene factors and motivators. The former is preventive and they cover salary, benefits, work conditions, and policies, and if ignored, these needs may lead to dissatisfaction. Contrastingly, the latter factors motivate and stimulate and inspire employees, bringing about their satisfaction and performance enhancement in an industry that seeks the same from its workers, Factors under motivation are meaningful work assignments, positive recognition, and a sense of importance to the business enterprise. Both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction causes differ, in a way that satisfaction depends on motivators whereas dissatisfaction depends on hygiene factors (Abubakar et al., 2018).

Moreover, Mobley et al.'s (1979) turnover model served as a basic turnover model throughout literature, proposed psychological model of turnover contends that a dissatisfied employee begins evaluating alternatives and quits if the alternative is

perceived to be able to meet his/her satisfaction. In essence, the turnover process refers to a series of decisions, initiating with the current job evaluation and culminating with the determination of satisfaction/dissatisfaction, which frequently ends up in turnover intention or actual turnover. Notably, the later extension to Mobley et al.'s (1979) model of turnover included work-related variables (e.g., organizational commitment). Also, voluntary turnover theories stem from March and Simon's theories. On the basis of their theory, the decision of the employee to quit his/her job is affected by perceived ease and movement desirability brought on by job satisfaction. Based on the field theory, that staying longer in the organization/community mitigates leave intention and actual leaving from the organization (Eleswed and Mohammed, 2013).

3. Methodology

The section is dedicated to presenting the study participants, collection of data, study instrument, and outcomes. The participants to the study numbering 15 were distributed questionnaire copies, after which, 13 copies were retrieved and deemed to be usable from which 47.4% were male respondents and 5.2% were female respondents. The remaining 13 questionnaires had incomplete data. From the number of distributed and retrieved copies, it can be stated that the rate of response is 86.7%. The study participants were randomly chosen from those willing to participate and those who met the researcher during reception and meeting venues. The sample was selected using the convenience sampling method, involving participants' selection in the workplace, wherever they can participate. Table 1 shows tabulate the descriptive analysis.

Table 1: Tabulates the descriptive analysis

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Job Satisfaction	13.30 1.80	1.80
Turnover Intention	6.89 2.54	6.89 2.54

A regression equation was estimated to test the linear relationship formulated in the null hypotheses. The following is a discussion of the results relating to the null hypothesis:

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intent of executive level central office administrators in Texas public school districts.

H_a: There is a statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intent of executive level central office administrators in Texas public school districts. Linear regression was computed to determine the relationship between the predictor variable job satisfaction and the criterion variable turnover intent. Table 2 shows tabulate the linear regression.

The primary research question that the study attempted to answer reads, "Does job satisfaction of northern border university staff affect their turnover intention?"

Table 2: Tabulates the linear regression

Variables	B	SE B	β	t	p
(Constant)	18.93	0.95			
Job Satisfaction	-0.905	0.071	0.642	12.76	0.000

4. Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, Northern Border University administrative staff was satisfied with their jobs and this may be attributed to the concern of the university in facilitating a good and positive work environment, which ensure the happiness and productivity of the employees and mitigate their turnover intention. This may also be attributed to the university being the only governmental university, supported by the government and maintained by the government in terms of quality and reputation. In this regard, the buildings and facilities of the university influence the job satisfaction level of the staff, particularly considering that the university design provides them a suitable working surrounding.

According to Aktar and Pangil (2018), this may also be attributed to the religious and cultural aspects that boost the work positivity of staff and their cooperation. Policies of the university that maintain product/service quality for a competitive edge against other universities may have also played a role, along with ongoing services developments of infrastructure providing offices, new staff services, and electronic services.

Staff members are evaluated through a service evaluation system based on the quality of the service provided each year online. The satisfaction of the staff may also be attributed to the increase in salaries that were established in January 2014 and further increases in July of the same year. The policies of the universities have a hand in raising the job satisfaction level, considering that job satisfaction and promotion have been evidenced to relate to the work environment, salary, and relationship with colleagues in prior studies (Al-Maaitah et al., 2015).

From the results, it is also evident that gender had a role as consistent with other prior studies, where males had higher satisfaction levels on the job compared to their female counterparts (Karan and Rahman, 2014). In this case, this may be related to the female staff sharing of working environment with the male staff, which confined their comfort. Also, female staff may be faced with higher work pressure as their leaders have less trust in them, because of the speed of provision of service. Moreover, staff with lower job experience indicated higher levels of job satisfaction, contradicting literature that revealed staff with more experience have higher job satisfaction levels (Karimi and Rahimi, 2020).

This result may be explained by the fact that experienced staff may hold higher expectations of better services and are more interested in developing and upgrading administrative systems. Based on a study by Aktar and Pangil (2018), a

positive and significant relationship exists between age, work experience, and job satisfaction. On the other hand, Hong et al. (2013) supported a negative significant relationship between age and level of job satisfaction. These results are expected to have several implications to organizations in their attempt to achieve enhanced overall job satisfaction and performance.

5. Further research

Further studies can extend the sample size of staff as a higher number of participants play a key role in verifying the generalizability of the findings. Also, a balanced ratio of men to women respondents could be achieved in future studies to provide significant results on the job satisfaction of both genders in relation to their turnover intention. Further studies could also compare faculty members and administrative staff job satisfaction and its relationship with their turnover.

6. Conclusion

The administrative staff of the Northern Border University had a good level of job satisfaction in their workplace environment, facilitating their productivity and security, and minimizing their rate of turnover. The University is convinced that its staff is their top asset and thus, high levels of competence, integrity, and professionalism are mandatory. NBU also attempts to instill the principles of entrepreneurship and decision-making autonomy in their staff, stressing the positive aspects of the job and downplaying the negative aspects. Moreover, the Saudi culture involves loyalty, which inspires the workforce's confidence in the work environment and in collaborative work. Job satisfaction may also be attributed to the employees' salaries at the time of the data collection.

According to Kafashpoor et al. (2014), there is a need to determine the processes that lead to instructors' satisfaction and commitment levels throughout their career stages, and on a similar line, this could be applied to administrative staff members. Also, Velmurugan and Sankar (2017) suggested that knowledge on the topic may be used as a guideline for educational decision-makers in enhancing their staff's professional well-being and practices. Owing to the extensive changes in the educational sector of Saudi Arabia, staff members' job satisfaction and demographic factors that influence the staff's turnover intentions require further in-depth examination.

Benchmarking of this study focus on the administrative staff as a point of view but the other studies focus on the academic staff, this study explains how job satisfaction plays an important role. This study focused on the role of job satisfaction in reducing employee job performance in public universities.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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