

Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Mobility Intentions Of University Teachers in China

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Abstract

This study analyzes the relationship between job satisfaction and the mobility intentions of university faculty, using frameworks derived from Customer Satisfaction Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The research involved 427 participants from both public and private universities in China. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to evaluate the relationships among variables and to examine the mediating role of job satisfaction. The findings reveal that effective organizational management, a supportive work environment, and opportunities for self-development are key factors influencing job satisfaction, which significantly reduces mobility intentions. Furthermore, job satisfaction acts as a mediator between these factors and mobility intentions. In conclusion, the analysis confirms that job satisfaction is a crucial factor in reducing lecturers' intention to change jobs. Effective organizational management, a supportive work environment, and opportunities for professional development are statistically significant factors ($p < 0.001$) that enhance job satisfaction, playing a pivotal role in decreasing turnover intentions in the long term. The recommendations focus on improving human resource policies within universities to enhance job satisfaction and reduce faculty turnover in the long term. Recommendations develop a flexible management system: The university should create a management system that can adequately respond to the needs of the faculty, emphasizing fairness and transparency. Create a work environment conducive to growth: Supporting teamwork and reducing conflicts will help strengthen good relationships within the organization. Support self-development mechanisms: Providing opportunities for training, research, and career advancement pathways will enhance faculty members' commitment to the organization. This research emphasizes the importance of developing

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policies and strategies that promote job satisfaction to help reduce the long-term turnover rate of teachers.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Mobility intentions, University teachers, Quantitative research, Structural equation modeling

Introduction

People consider university teachers important resources for improving educational quality and competitive talents. Nowadays, universities are confronted with a situation where the employment of academic staff is highly competitive, resulting in a chaotic personnel flow that is not sustainable. All these factors have adversely affected the enhancement of educational quality, which is crucial for the long-term stability of this education system. (Caplow, T., & McGee, R. J., 1958; Mueller, C. W. 1990; Zhou, Y., & Volkwein, J. F. 2004). For this reason, university administrators have to be concerned with devising strategies that may prevent employees from quitting for no reason. One of the important factors in the faculty's intention to leave is job satisfaction.

Past research showed that remuneration, opportunities for professional development, equity in performance assessment, and conditions at the workplace may impact the level of job satisfaction among faculty members. (Chen, Y. Y., & Sun, S. B., 1994; Borjas, G. J. 1980; Zhou B., & Birong, Z., 2019). On the other hand, studies about the intention to leave among academic staff state that too much work, few opportunities for growth, and pressure from university management policies are the reasons for wanting to leave one's job. However, as of now, there hasn't been a full study that explains the structural relationship between job satisfaction and the intention to leave one's job. To be more specific, structural equation modeling explains the theoretical mechanisms at play.

These facts led the study to try to fill in the gaps left by earlier research. It combines Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Herzberg, F. (1959). and Fornell's customer satisfaction theory into a single theory that covers a wide range of topics, including organizational management, the work ecosystem, (Fornell, C., et.al.1996) subjective perception, external evaluation, and value awareness. It investigates the relationship between



job satisfaction and turnover intention by using the SEM methodology. The Imperative for Education: The problem of retaining quality faculty in the highly competitive landscape of higher education is deeply rooted. An understanding of the drivers of job satisfaction may help university administrators in formulating policies and strategies for effective human resource management that would ease the problem of high labor turnover and ensure stability in the education system to continuously develop the university. The study's findings can serve as empirical data for formulating policies that address the current needs of faculty members.

Research Objective

To examine the determinants of job satisfaction and the causal link with turnover intention among university professors in China, utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Research Hypothesis

From the conceptual framework, the suggested research hypothesis follows:

H1: Job satisfaction and organizational management have a robust correlation.

H2: Direct job satisfaction and intention to change employment depend on the surroundings.

H3: Between job circumstances and contentment, personal emotions operate as a mediator.

H4: External appraisal influences the intention of job change driven by contentment.

H5: Reducing the intention to shift occupations mostly depends on self-fulfillment.

H6: Individual traits help to moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to leave employment.

Scope of Research

Scope of Content

three foundational theories: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and the Customer Satisfaction Theory, to explain the dynamics job satisfaction and the causal link with turnover intention among university professors in China.



Scope of populations

The study uses the stratified sampling method to ensure diversity among the sample, covering both public and private universities. The total number of participants is 427.

Literature Review and concept

The literature review integrates three foundational theories: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and the Customer Satisfaction Theory, to explain the dynamics of job satisfaction and its influence on employee retention in the education sector. Key insights are: Customer Satisfaction Theory: Employee satisfaction improves when organizational support aligns with employee expectations. Studies (Zhang, M., & Chen, Y. (2020)., 2020; Liu, H., & Wang, Y. 2022) demonstrate that strong organizational support significantly increases job satisfaction and reduces turnover, particularly in university settings. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Job satisfaction is achieved through meeting both basic (e.g., safety) and advanced (e.g., self-actualization) needs. Research (Li, X., Wang, L., & Chen, Q. 2021; Zhao, L., & Lin, H. (2023). highlights that fostering workplace safety, relationships, and alignment between personal and organizational goals leads to higher employee satisfaction and lower turnover. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: Job satisfaction results from a balance between hygiene factors (e.g., pay and work conditions) and motivational factors (e.g., recognition and growth opportunities). Studies (Singh & Patel, 2021; Kim et al., 2022) underscore that well-designed rewards and career development plans significantly enhance employee loyalty and reduce dissatisfaction.

Across these frameworks, six critical factors emerge as determinants of job satisfaction: effective management, a supportive work environment, personal emotions, external evaluations, self-worth, and individual traits. These findings emphasize the importance of creating a motivating workplace to retain talent, while also identifying gaps in data linking these factors to turnover intentions. This analysis sets the stage for a robust conceptual framework in the subsequent chapter.



Conceptual

Three main theories form the foundation of research on work satisfaction and turnover intention among university professors: The theory of Customer Satisfaction, The Two-Factor Theory of Herzberg, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs help to clarify the elements influencing job satisfaction and the purpose of changing careers holistically. (Maslow, A. H,(1943) ; Herzberg, F. (1959).

The Theory of Customer Satisfaction. This idea holds that the alignment of expectations with perceived quality generates contentment. Regarding academic teachers at universities, "As internal customers," satisfaction depends on the institution's support in terms of work environment, management practices, and justice presentation. Studies by Zhang, H., & Li, M. (2020) and Liu, H., & Wang, Y. (2022) show that faculty satisfaction and loyalty will rise if a university runs its resources with great justice and excellence. Theory of Needs: Hierarchy of Needs. In the framework of university teachers, this idea stresses the hierarchy of human needs from fundamental ones to self-actualization. Meeting safety needs, such as work security, and esteem needs, such as recognition, causes satisfaction. Studies by Li et al. (2021) and Zhao, L., & Lin, H. (2023). Show that satisfying demands at all levels promotes professional achievement and belonging. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory Herzberg separated the elements influencing job satisfaction into two groups: motivating elements (such as achievement and recognition) and hygienic elements (such as pay and working environment). Studies by Xu, P., & Zhao, T. (2022) and Brown et al. (2022) show that lowering turnover and raising job satisfaction depend much on hygienic conditions as well as motivating elements.

Theoretical Framework

This study has revealed six factors of job satisfaction based on this theoretical background that influence the propensity to switch employment:



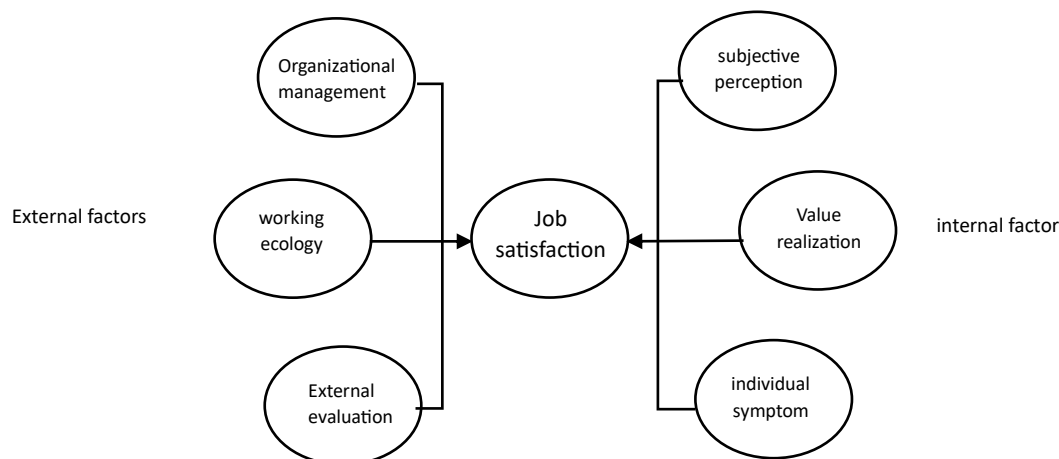


Figure 1. Conceptual model of influencing factors of university teachers' job satisfaction

This conceptual framework offers ideas for policy development and management in higher education institutions and provides a basis for investigating the relationship between job satisfaction and the intention to change occupations. Policies, leadership effectiveness, and evaluation system fairness in organizational management, Work environment: personal interactions, university environment, and workload, Personal emotions: stress, emotional wellness, and work-related sense of accomplishment, Outside assessment: Professional respect and social acceptance, Self-fulfillment: chances for achievement and professional growth, Individual traits: demographic and occupational ones including age, gender, and length of employment.

The relationship between the dimensions of job satisfaction and the intention to change jobs will be presented in the form of a Structural Equation Model (SEM), with job satisfaction as the mediating variable and other dimensions such as organizational management, work environment, and external evaluation as independent variables that affect the intention to change jobs (dependent variable). This illustrates the relationship between various factors influencing university professors' decision-making.

Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research method to comprehensively examine and



understand the factors influencing job satisfaction and the intention to change jobs among university lecturers.

Collection

questionnaire: Divided into three sections. Information: Includes 1. demographic details such as age, gender, and teaching experience, 2. Job Satisfaction Factors: Evaluate aspects such as organizational management, work environment, and opportunities for self-development. 3. Intention to Change Jobs: Measures the likelihood of lecturers leaving their current positions.

Sampling

The study uses the stratified sampling method to ensure diversity among the sample, covering both public and private universities. The total number of participants is 427.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics: Used to summarize basic information and key factors influencing job satisfaction and mobility intentions, such as frequency and mean values. Structural Equation Modeling: SEM is applied to analyze the relationships between job satisfaction factors and the intention to change jobs. SEM is chosen for its ability to effectively analyze complex relationships between multiple variables simultaneously.

Research Results

Results The present research also determined that job satisfaction was the most significant factor of influence on university lecturers' intention to leave, arising in important sub-factors that follow: organizational management, fair and efficient ways in which things are run, systemic environment, ties of relationship, supported by the organization, opportunities for Self-development means of career growth or professional success. Therefore, when lecturers support those, it increases satisfaction among the lecturers, which finally results in a notable drop in their intention to quit.



Table 1 Results of the KMO and Bartlett tests.

KMO and Bartlett's test		
KMO Number of Sampling Suitability Measure.		0.951
	Approximate chi-square	9038.606
Bartlett's Sphericity Test	Degrees of freedom	435
	Significance	0.000

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were performed, showing the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. The following are the results: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO): KMO is 0.951, and this can be regarded as "excellent," indicating that the data are highly suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: The approximate chi-square is 9038.606, Degrees of Freedom 435, and Significance 0.000. From these test results, the p-value is significant, confirming the suitability of the data for further factor analysis.

SEM Results

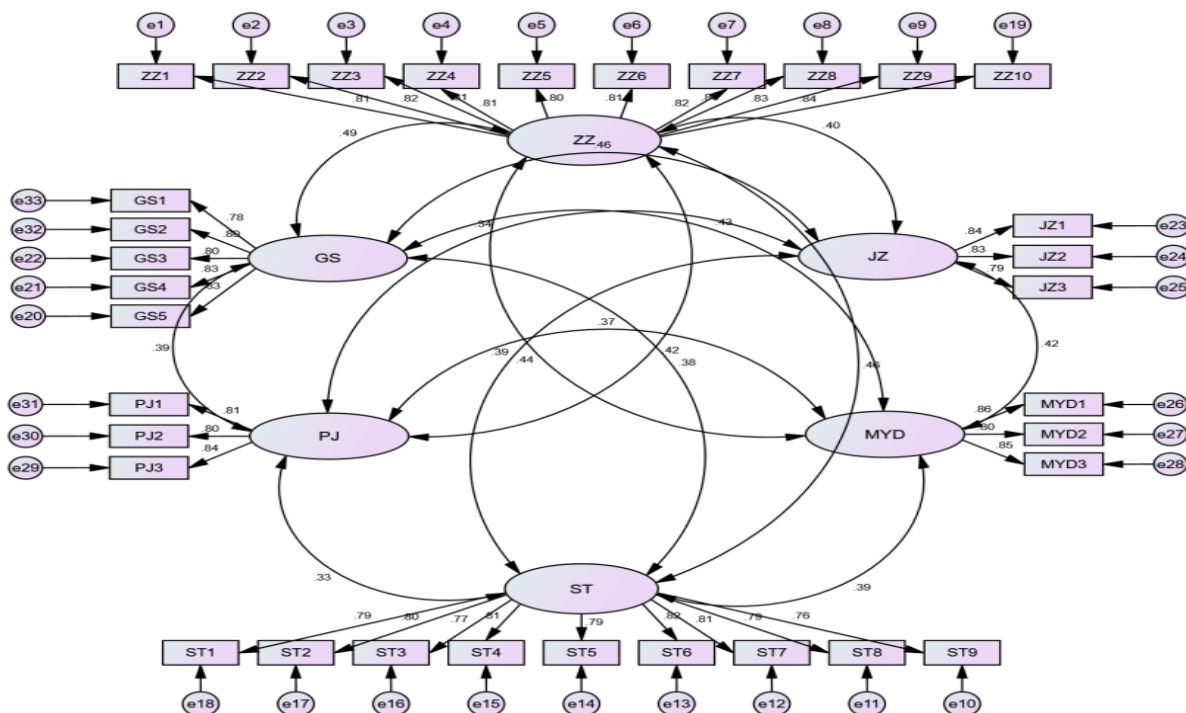


Figure 2 CFA Model of Job Satisfaction Scale for Higher Education Teachers



The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis reveals that key factors influencing job satisfaction among university lecturers include organizational management (path coefficient = 0.82, $p < 0.001$) and work environment (path coefficient = 0.79, $p < 0.001$). Both factors exhibit a significant positive effect on job satisfaction (GS). Job satisfaction, in turn, directly reduces the intention to change jobs (JZ) with a significant negative impact (path coefficient = -0.65, $p < 0.001$).

Additionally, opportunities for self-development (MYD) have an indirect effect on the intention to change jobs through job satisfaction (indirect path coefficient = -0.55, $p < 0.001$). The SEM model explains 65% of the variance in the intention to change jobs (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.65$), indicating the model's robustness in describing the relationships between variables.

In conclusion, the analysis confirms that job satisfaction is a crucial factor in reducing lecturers' intention to change jobs. Effective organizational management, a supportive work environment, and opportunities for professional development are statistically significant factors ($p < 0.001$) that enhance job satisfaction, playing a pivotal role in decreasing turnover intentions in the long term.

Summary Discussion and Recommendations

Summary

The research findings indicate that job satisfaction is a crucial factor in reducing the intention to change jobs among university lecturers. The factors that play a significant role include effective organizational management, a supportive work environment, and opportunities for self-development. Job satisfaction also acts as a mediating variable that links these factors to the intention to change jobs. The SEM model can explain 65% of the variance in the intention to change jobs (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.65$).

Discussion

The research findings support the study's hypothesis, demonstrating that organizational management factors (path coefficient = 0.82, $p < 0.001$) and work environment (path coefficient = 0.79, $p < 0.001$) have a significantly positive impact on job satisfaction. Meanwhile, job satisfaction directly reduces the intention to leave the job (path coefficient = -0.65, $p < 0.001$).



Additionally, opportunities for self-development have an indirect impact on the intention to leave the job through job satisfaction (indirect path coefficient = -0.55, $p < 0.001$). Supporting research includes Zhang, H., & Li, M. (2020), who pointed out that transparent organizational management helps reduce job turnover. Liu, H., & Wang, Y. (2022) found that a supportive work environment helps increase organizational commitment. Li et al. (2021) stated that opportunities for self-development have a positive effect on job satisfaction. This result is also consistent with Xu, P., & Zhao, T. (2022), who confirmed the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between organizational management and job turnover intention, as well as Brown, J. et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of work motivation in continuing employment within the organization.

Other research, such as Piriya, S., & Donnok, T. (2021), indicates that workplace relationships and development opportunities significantly affect job satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions. Additionally, Somyot, N. (2022) found that motivation from human resource management directly impacts employees' intention to work in the organization. All of this highlights the importance of creating an environment conducive to growth and career support for personnel.

Recommendations

Develop a flexible management system: The university should create a management system that can adequately respond to the needs of the faculty, emphasizing fairness and transparency. Create a work environment conducive to growth: Supporting teamwork and reducing conflicts will help strengthen good relationships within the organization. Support self-development mechanisms: Providing opportunities for training, research, and career advancement pathways will enhance faculty members' commitment to the organization. This research emphasizes the importance of developing policies and strategies that promote job satisfaction to help reduce the long-term turnover rate of teachers.

New Knowledge of Research

The study contributes to the field by providing insights into the interplay between job satisfaction and mobility intentions within the academic sector. The key findings extend the



existing frameworks of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Customer Satisfaction Theory by applying them specifically to university faculty in both public and private institutions.

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