



A STUDY ON EMPLOYEES' INTENTION TO LEAVE: A CASE STUDY OF PRIVATE SCHOOL IN NAWALAPITIYA

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Employee retention is crucial for the success of any organization, particularly in private schools, where consistent teaching quality is vital. In Nawalapitiya, a leading private school faces challenges due to employees' intentions to leave, which can disrupt the educational process, negatively impact students and increase operational costs for the management. This study investigates the factors influencing employees' intentions to leave in this context, focusing on job satisfaction, career development, job stress and rewards and recognition as independent variables, with Employees' intention to leave as the dependent variable. A descriptive survey design was employed, with data collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed to all employees, making sampling unnecessary. A five-point Likert scale was used for data collection. The research applied Cronbach's Alpha for reliability testing and employed Descriptive Analysis, Pearson Correlation and Regression for hypothesis testing. The study's findings reveal that career development negatively influences employees' intentions to leave, while job stress positively affects this intention. Conversely, job satisfaction and rewards and recognition exhibited a negative relationship with the intention to leave, though these factors were not found to be statistically significant. The study concluded that identifying and understanding the factors influencing employees' intentions to leave are critical for enhancing human resource practices in private schools. The findings suggest that management should focus on improving career development opportunities and managing job stress to reduce turnover intentions. Moreover, fostering an organizational culture that values employees' opinions and implements strategies tailored to these factors can create a supportive environment, ultimately reducing employees' intention to leave.

Keywords: employee retention, private schools, job satisfaction, career development, job stress.

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1. INTRODUCTION

At all times, talented employees are considered to be the backbone and the most valuable asset of any organization that gives the organization a competitive advantage over its rivals. Employee turnover has been a very serious issue in the field of human resource management. Employee turnover can be negative or positive to organizations. One of the main negative consequences of turnover is the personnel cost associated with selection, recruitment, training and development of new employees to replace the employees who voluntarily quit the organization (Staw, 1980). This research focuses on a leading private school in Nawalapitiya. The School is considered to be one of the leading schools in the town up until the present (2023). Although it has been the leading school in Nawalapitiya for more than a decade, the quality of service has been dropping as per the opinion of the customers (parents) and the poor results observable in records of the Ordinary Level Examination result sheets. Further, it is also evident that the employee turnover rate in school has shown a significant increase annually as per the records held by the management.

1.1 Significance of the research

The study investigates factors influencing employees' intention to leave a private school, aiming to provide insights for management to understand employee needs, solve problems and retain skilled employees for long-term success. The Morning News (Online - 2019), reports that over the last decade, private schools are sprouting like mushrooms in Sri Lanka. However, apart from a few leading international schools, the quality of education of some of the private schools is now in question along with the lack of proper infrastructure facilities, academic resources and teachers. However, the biggest issue regarding private schools is the lack of a regulatory mechanism that ensures the maintenance of standards of these schools (Afra & Sewwandi, 2021) although there have been several studies with regard to employees' intention to leave in different organizations and places. The studies of employees' intention to leave with regard to schools are few in number (Jonathan et al., 2013). Thus this study focuses on investigating the factors affecting employees' intention to leave with regard to a private school.

Research objectives

- 1) To identify the factors affecting employees' Intention to leave, with a view of providing clear constructs to the employers of the school to maximize the retention of skilled and experienced teachers.
- 2) To identify the most significant and least significant factors contributing for employees' intention to leave.

Research questions

- 1) What are the factors affecting employees' intention to leave?
- 2) What are the most and least significant factors contributing to employees' intention to leave?

Formulation of hypothesis/conceptual framework

Intention to leave: Bothma and Roodt (2012) identified turnover or intention that is blended with under-identity bracelet with work; is a form of withdrawal behaviour.



Job satisfaction: Pepe (2010) defined job satisfaction as the extent of the positive emotional path in the direction of a job. McKnight et al. (2009) similarly demonstrated that job satisfaction negatively influences the turnover intentions. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was developed.

H1: Job satisfaction has a negative effect on employees' intention to leave.

Career development: According to Mondy and Martocchio (2016: 234), career development is a formal approach that organizations use for people with the right qualifications and pertinence available when needed.

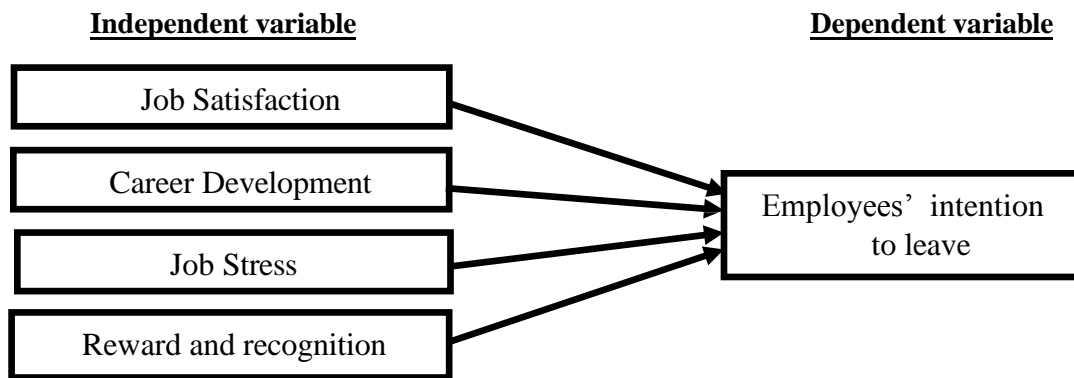
H2: Career development has a negative effect on employees' intention to leave.

Job stress: Job stress is a key determinant of numerous undesired employee behavioural outcomes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction and the intention to turnover (Williams et al., 2001; Barsky et al., 2004; Chiu et al., 2005).

H3: Job stress has a positive effect on employees' intention to leave.

Reward and recognition: Petroni (2000) suggested that the absence of an appropriate rewarding system may increase the probability of turnover among employees. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was developed

H5: Reward and recognition has a negative effect on employees' intention to leave.



SOURCES:

- Bothma and Roodt (2012)
- (Williams et al.,2001)
- McKnight et al. (2009)
- Mondy and Martocchio (2016)
- Robert Mathis & Jackson (2010)
- Spector (2003)
- Milne (2007)
- Petroni (2000)
- Markova and Ford (2011)
- Abbasi and Hollman (2000)
- (Qazi et.al, 2015)

2. METHODOLOY

The current research adopted a survey approach which has employed a descriptive design to support the study of hypotheses development. This research follows a positivism philosophy and a deductive approach. It also uses mono method and relies on quantitative data collection and analysis. Cross sectional data is used to analyze and understand the phenomena at a specific point of time.

- ✓ **Method:** There was no sampling technique used as the entire population (staff of 55 employees of the school) were included for this survey. The research instrument was a



Likert scale questionnaire which included two main sections with its sub sections respectively. This study used the primary data and secondary data collection method. Primary data was obtained through questionnaires and the secondary data were collected using internet and journal articles and also from internal records of the school.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Reliability: According to Cronbach’s Alpha, values for the variables: intention to leave, job satisfaction, career development, job stress, reward and recognition used was above 0.828.

3.2 Descriptive analysis

- ✓ **Gender:** Majority of the respondents were females which is 46 (83.6%) while the male respondents were a minority of 9 (16.4%)
- ✓ **Respondents age:** 19 (34.5%) of the respondents were under 25 years, 15 (27.3%) respondents’ were between 25-35 years, 11 (20%) of respondents were between 36-45 years, 6 (10.9%) of respondents were between the age of 46 – 55 years the least number of respondents who were above 55 years were 4 (7.3%), respectively.
- ✓ **Marital status:** Respondents unmarried (single) were 27 which was 49.1%. On the other hand, 28 respondents were married which is 50.9 % out of the total respondents.
- ✓ **Education level:** Out of the total respondents, a majority of 29 (52.7%) of them had completed A/L, 12 respondents (21.8%) had completed their HND, respondents who have completed the diploma were 9 (16.4%) there were few respondents who had a Degree and O/L as their educational qualification which were 3 (5.5%) and 2 (3.6%), respectively.
- ✓ **Monthly income:** The majority of employees had an income range of 11k - 20k which is 25 (45.5%), the second most respondents had a range of 21k – 30k is 23 (4.8%), the income range of 41k and above is earned only by 4 (7.3%) of respondents. The least numbers of respondent’s income range of 31k – 40k was 3 (5.5%).
- ✓ **Respondents experience:** Majority of the respondents 21 (38.2%) are employed in this school for less than 1 year. Respondents who are employed for a period of above 10 years are 11 (20%). Respondents who work in the school for 4 – 6 years are 9 (16.4%) while the employees who work for 7 – 10 years are 8 (14.5%) and least respondents are employed for a period of 1 – 3 years which is 6 (10.9%).

3.3 Correlation analysis

Table 01: Correlation analysis

	Job satisfaction	Career development	Job stress	Rewards and recognition	Intention to leave
Job satisfaction	1				
Career development	.797**	1			
Job stress	-.766**	-.754**	1		
Rewards and recognition	.668**	.866**	-.651**	1	
Intention to leave	-.678**	-.826**	.744**	-.729**	1

Through correlation analysis, it became apparent that job satisfaction has a significant and negative correlation coefficient with the intention to leave with a coefficient of $r = -.678$, $p < 0.01$. Career Development has a strong significant and negative correlation with Intention to leave with a coefficient of $r = -.826$, $p < 0.01$. Job Stress has a significant and positive correlation



with Intention to leave with the coefficient of $r = .744, p < 0.01$. Rewards and recognition has a strong significant and negative correlation with the intention to leave with the coefficient of $r = -.729, p < 0.01$.

3.4 Regression analysis

According to simple regression Beta value, the factor that has the most significant impact on intention to leave is career development with a B value $-.765$ and significant value of $.000$, following that is job stress with a B value $.947$ significant value of $.000$, amongst the less significant is job satisfaction with a B value of -1.069 and significant value of $.000$ the least significant factor that affect employees' intention to leave is reward and recognition with a B value -1.025 of significant value of $.000$

3.5 Results of hypothesis testing

Table 02: Results of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	B Value	Significant value	Decision
H1 - Job satisfaction has a negative effect on employees' intention to leave	-1.069	.000	Accepted
H2 - Career development has a negative effect on employees' intention to leave	-.765	.000	Accepted
H3 - Job stress has a positive effect on employees' intention to leave.	.947	.000	Accepted
H4 - Reward and recognition has a negative effect on employees' intention to leave	-1.025	.000	Accepted

4. CONCLUSION

Overall, findings have indicated a strong and significant relationship among the independent variables (job satisfaction, career development, job stress and reward and recognition) and the dependent variable (employee's intention to leave). Ultimately, career development was found to be the most significant factor that affected the Employee's intention to leave while the least factor that affected the employee's intention to leave was reward and recognition. The findings also revealed that among the independent variables, job stress had a positive relationship with the employee's intention to leave while all the other three independent variables namely job satisfaction, career development and reward and recognition had a negative relationship. This eventually states that the organization should prioritize job satisfaction, career development and employee rewards while minimizing job stress to retain long-term employees.

The study highlights the link between job satisfaction, career development, job stress and reward and recognition among employees indicating that job satisfaction, career development and minimal stress reduce job turnover.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Job satisfaction, career development, job stress and reward and recognition are crucial factors influencing employee intentions to leave a school. To improve these, schools should focus on timely promotions, competitive pay structures and effective job stress management, while enhancing job satisfaction through increments, friendly communication and prompt appreciation. To mitigate the intention to leave among the teachers, the school (the management) can stick onto the following:

Implementing a promotion scheme based on performance, offering various training and development programmes and workshops to enhance employees' skills and career opportunities

providing teachers with flexible schedules, workload reduction plans, equal work distribution, flexible working hours, resources, and stress management programs to manage stress and ensure employee well-



being. Identify employee dissatisfaction and offering alternative options, ensuring timely salary, increments, a clean, peaceful work environment, and fostering smooth communication between supervisors and teachers which in turn will increase job satisfaction. Offer alternative rewards, including monetary and non-monetary recognition, to retain skilled teachers. Continuous recognition encourages hardworking efforts.

Note: The management of the school has not permitted the usage of the actual name of the school, thus, it is used as ‘the school’ throughout the study.

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