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STAYING POWER: UNLOCKING FACULTY RETENTION THROUGH SATISFACTION, SUPPORT, AND STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN LIBYAN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Employee turnover among academic staff presents a significant challenge to the effectiveness and sustainability of higher education institutions, especially in developing countries such as Libya. This study explores the key factors influencing job satisfaction and turnover intention among faculty members in Libyan public universities. Specifically, it investigates the roles of compensation, career development, and organisational commitment as antecedents of job satisfaction, which in turn influences turnover intention. Additionally, the research examines job satisfaction as a mediating variable and perceived organisational support as a moderating factor in the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Grounded in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model of Organisational Commitment, and Employee Turnover Theory, the study adopts a quantitative research design. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to academic staff from various Libyan public universities. The study aims to fill a critical gap in the literature by offering empirical insights into how institutional and individual-level variables interact to shape retention decisions in the higher education context. Preliminary literature suggests that inadequate compensation, limited career growth, and low organisational commitment significantly contribute to faculty turnover. In contrast, higher job satisfaction and perceived organisational support can mitigate these effects. The anticipated findings are expected to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving human resource practices in Libyan universities. These may include enhancing compensation packages, investing in faculty development, and strengthening organisational support systems to improve staff retention, performance, and institutional stability in the face of national challenges.
Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intention, Compensation, Organisational Commitment, Higher Education.

INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover remains a persistent challenge across organizations worldwide, and higher education institutions are particularly vulnerable to its detrimental effects. Academic turnover has attracted growing scholarly attention due to its significant negative impact on institutional performance, continuity, and the overall quality of education (Hom et al., 2017). Turnover intention, defined as an employee's conscious and deliberate willingness to leave an organization, is widely regarded as a strong predictor of actual turnover and presents critical concerns for universities aiming to sustain academic excellence and operational stability (Mobley, 1977; Wong & Cheng, 2020). In developing countries like Libya, where higher education plays a significant

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role in national development and societal progress, academic turnover has become a pressing issue demanding urgent research and policy interventions (MHESR, 2023).

Libyan public universities have been increasingly confronted with rising faculty turnover rates, which undermine their capacity to achieve key academic and strategic objectives (Ahmad Saufi et al., 2023). Such turnover disrupts not only teaching and learning but also diminishes research productivity and tarnishes institutional reputation. Internal reports from the Libyan Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research reveal that faculty attrition has escalated in recent years due to a combination of factors, including inadequate compensation, limited career advancement opportunities, organisational instability, and ongoing socio-political turmoil (MHESR, 2023). Despite the significance of this issue, empirical research examining the determinants of turnover intention among faculty in Libyan universities remains scarce.

Job satisfaction is well-established as a critical determinant of employee behaviour, influencing decisions to remain with or leave an organization. It is generally understood as a positive emotional response resulting from the evaluation of one's job experiences (Spector, 1997). Employees who experience higher job satisfaction tend to demonstrate stronger organisational loyalty and commitment, whereas dissatisfaction often leads to increased turnover intentions (Chen et al., 2023). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory offers a valuable lens to understand this phenomenon by distinguishing between intrinsic motivators, such as achievement and recognition that promote satisfaction, and extrinsic hygiene factors, like salary and supervision, whose absence causes dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Within academia, the lack of both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction significantly elevates the risk of faculty turnover (Orpina et al., 2022a).

Compensation is a crucial factor influencing faculty retention, functioning not only as financial remuneration but also as a symbol of institutional appreciation and value recognition (Serang et al., 2023). Competitive and fair compensation packages are essential to attract and retain talented academics, reducing their inclination to seek alternative employment (Ginting et al., 2023). Studies have demonstrated that inadequate or delayed salary payments, particularly in the public sector, fuel dissatisfaction and withdrawal intentions (Artha & Jahja, 2023). In Libya, although efforts have been made to reform public sector wages, academic institutions often remain excluded from these improvements, exacerbating faculty dissatisfaction (Ali Elabbar, 2022).

Career development represents another key predictor of turnover intention, encompassing initiatives and opportunities that support employees' professional growth, skill acquisition, and career advancement (Kim, 2017). Institutions that fail to offer clear career pathways or invest in faculty development face higher turnover rates (Raharjo et al., 2022). In the Libyan context, limited access to training programs, research funding, international conferences, and collaborative networks has left many faculty members feeling professionally stagnant, which contributes to their decisions to leave or seek opportunities beyond academia (Elabbar, 2021; Bredan et al., 2023).

Organisational commitment also plays a vital role in turnover dynamics. Meyer and Allen (1991) conceptualized organisational commitment as comprising three components: affective commitment (emotional attachment to the institution), continuance commitment (perceived costs associated with leaving), and normative commitment (a sense of obligation to stay). Faculty with

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high affective commitment generally display stronger loyalty and are less likely to resign (Zhu et al., 2022). Conversely, low levels of commitment can amplify the adverse effects of poor compensation and limited career growth on turnover intentions. Research across sectors consistently finds that employees with weak organisational commitment are more prone to voluntary turnover (Abet et al., 2023; A. Hussain et al., 2020).

Although prior research has examined the independent effects of job satisfaction, compensation, career development, and organisational commitment on turnover intention, there is limited understanding of how these factors interact within the specific environment of Libyan public universities. Recent studies underscore the importance of investigating mediating and moderating mechanisms to better comprehend turnover processes. For example, job satisfaction may serve as a mediator between compensation, career development, organisational commitment, and turnover intention, partially explaining how these antecedents influence faculty decisions (K. Hussain et al., 2023). Additionally, perceived organisational support, faculty members' beliefs that their institution values their contributions and well-being, may moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, buffering the negative impact of dissatisfaction (Giao et al., 2020). These complex interrelationships call for a comprehensive model capturing both direct and indirect influences on turnover intention.

The unique Libyan context further complicates faculty retention challenges. Political instability, economic uncertainty, and fragmented institutional governance severely constrain universities' ability to offer competitive compensation, improve infrastructure, and support professional development programs (MHESR, 2023; Ali Elabbar, 2022). Faculty members often express dissatisfaction with inefficient administrative processes, lack of recognition, and limited academic autonomy, all of which erode organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Alzubi, 2018; Halid et al., 2020).

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine the relationships between compensation, career development, organisational commitment, and turnover intention among academic staff in Libyan public universities, while considering job satisfaction as a mediating factor and perceived organisational support as a moderator. Utilizing a quantitative research approach grounded in established theoretical frameworks, the study aims to generate empirical evidence that can inform institutional policies and strategies to improve faculty retention. Addressing faculty turnover in Libya is not merely an operational necessity but a strategic imperative, given the fundamental role that universities play in advancing education and national development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee turnover intention among academic staff remains a pressing issue, especially in public universities of developing countries such as Libya, where it threatens institutional stability and educational quality. Scholars have consistently identified several interrelated factors that influence whether faculty members consider leaving their institutions. Key among these are job satisfaction, organisational commitment, compensation, career development, and perceived organisational support (Hom et al., 2017; Abet et al., 2023). This review synthesizes the theoretical and empirical

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insights on these constructs to better understand their roles in shaping turnover intentions within higher education contexts.

Job satisfaction, defined as an individual's affective response to their job and workplace environment, has long been established as a critical predictor of turnover intention (Spector, 1997; Chen et al., 2023). In academia, job satisfaction extends beyond salary to include factors such as teaching load, research support, collegial relationships, and leadership quality (Zamzami et al., 2022). According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, intrinsic motivators like achievement and recognition drive satisfaction, whereas extrinsic hygiene factors, including compensation and organizational policies, help avoid dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Multiple studies have affirmed the inverse relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Hussain et al. (2023) noted that academic staff who felt satisfied with their work were less likely to entertain thoughts of leaving, particularly when institutions fostered innovation and professional growth. Orpina et al. (2022) also highlighted job satisfaction as a mediating factor between compensation, career advancement, and turnover intention. However, the influence of job satisfaction is not uniformly straightforward; some studies, such as those by O'Connor (2018) and Tran et al. (2020), found insignificant effects in certain academic settings, suggesting that other variables like perceived organisational support or socio-political conditions may interplay with satisfaction to influence turnover decisions.

Organisational commitment, the psychological bond an employee has with their institution, is another significant factor affecting turnover intention. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model distinguishes affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving), and normative commitment (sense of obligation). Among academic staff, affective commitment is particularly salient due to their intrinsic motivation and identification with the academic profession (Zhu et al., 2022). Numerous investigations have documented a robust negative correlation between organisational commitment and turnover intention. Steil et al. (2019) synthesized findings from 35 studies, identifying organisational commitment as one of the most consistent predictors of faculty retention across diverse contexts. Abet et al. (2023) similarly stressed that weak organisational commitment, especially in resource-limited environments, intensifies the risk of voluntary turnover. Within Libyan public universities, factors such as perceived administrative inefficiency, constrained academic freedom, and insufficient recognition contribute to diminished organisational commitment, further exacerbating faculty disengagement (Ali Elabbar, 2022). Organisational commitment often interacts with job satisfaction and perceived institutional support, either strengthening or weakening their respective impacts on turnover intentions (Jain & Sullivan, 2020).

Compensation plays a foundational role in employee retention by addressing essential physiological and security needs as articulated in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943). In academic institutions, compensation encompasses direct salaries, benefits, allowances, and non-monetary incentives such as recognition and professional development opportunities (Serang et al., 2023). Numerous studies affirm that inadequate or irregular compensation is a significant driver of turnover intention. For instance, Ginting et al. (2023) reported that faculty dissatisfaction

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due to poor pay was a strong predictor of turnover in Indonesian public universities. Similarly, Artha and Jahja (2023) highlighted that delays in salary disbursement and opaque reward systems demotivate lecturers and increase their intention to leave. Nonetheless, the relationship between compensation and turnover is complex; some research (e.g., Alhempi et al., 2021) suggests that higher pay may paradoxically correlate with greater mobility as better compensation opens external opportunities. Contextual variables such as national economic conditions and public service motivations further influence this relationship. In Libya, public university faculty frequently cite low and inconsistent salaries as a principal source of dissatisfaction, compounded by their exclusion from government-wide salary reforms, which exacerbates turnover pressures (MHESR, 2023; Ali Elabbar, 2022).

Career development opportunities significantly influence faculty retention by enabling professional growth and advancement. This encompasses training programs, mentorship, promotion pathways, research grants, and participation in conferences (Kim, 2017). Empirical evidence consistently associates limited career development with increased turnover intentions. For example, Hidayah and Ananda (2021) found that perceptions of career stagnation compelled many academic staff to consider alternative employment. Raharjo et al. (2022) emphasized the role of structured development initiatives in enhancing job satisfaction and organisational commitment. In the Libyan academic context, funding constraints, limited international collaboration, and scarce professional development opportunities hinder career progression, leaving faculty feeling professionally immobilized (Elabbar, 2021; Bredan et al., 2023). Without targeted investment in career development, universities risk losing skilled educators and researchers to institutions with more robust growth prospects.

Perceived organisational support (POS), defined as employees' belief that their institution values their contributions and cares for their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986), has emerged as an influential moderator in turnover research. High POS correlates positively with job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and retention (Giao et al., 2020). Within academia, POS may manifest through institutional support for research activities, fair performance evaluations, responsive leadership, and wellness initiatives. Arasanmi and Krishna (2019) demonstrated that POS can buffer the impact of low job satisfaction on turnover intention; faculty who perceive strong organisational support are less likely to consider leaving despite job-related dissatisfaction. However, Libyan universities often lack robust support systems, with faculty reporting limited feedback, insufficient mentorship, and unresponsive administrative structures (Ali Elabbar, 2022). Enhancing perceived organisational support thus represents a critical strategy to improve faculty morale and reduce turnover risks.

Turnover intention among academics is influenced by a complex interplay of individual attitudes and institutional conditions. Hom et al. (2017) identify job satisfaction, organisational commitment, compensation, and career growth as central determinants of faculty turnover. Contextual factors such as institutional reputation, job security, and governance quality further shape turnover dynamics (Amani & Komba, 2016; Alzubi, 2018). Recent global trends show rising faculty turnover rates; for instance, Malaysia experienced a 20% turnover rate in 2017 (Falahat et

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al., 2019), and over 100,000 faculty resignations were recorded in the United States in May 2019 alone (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). In Libya, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR, 2023) documents an alarming escalation in faculty turnover attributed to brain drain, early retirements, and migration toward government sectors. Despite this, scholarly research focusing on turnover intention within Libya's higher education remains sparse. This gap underscores the necessity of investigating how job satisfaction mediates, and perceived organisational support moderates, the relationships between compensation, career development, organisational commitment, and turnover intention in this unique context. Understanding these complex interrelations is essential for developing effective, evidence-based policies to retain qualified faculty members, which is imperative for the sustainability and advancement of Libya's higher education system.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section details the research design, methodology, population, sampling procedures, instrument development, data collection, and analysis techniques utilized in this study. The chosen methodology aims to fulfill the primary objective of examining how compensation, career development, and organisational commitment influence turnover intention, with job satisfaction acting as a mediating variable and perceived organisational support serving as a moderator.

The study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional, and correlational research design, which is well-suited for investigating relationships among multiple variables at a single point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This quantitative approach facilitates the objective measurement of variables and the application of statistical analysis to test the hypothesized relationships. The correlational design is particularly appropriate because the study seeks to explore the strength and direction of associations between independent variables (compensation, career development, organisational commitment) and the dependent variable (turnover intention) (Saunders et al., 2019).

Philosophically, the study is grounded in positivism, which posits that reality is objective and can be measured through observable, quantifiable data (Bell et al., 2022). This worldview aligns with the use of structured surveys and statistical techniques to generate generalizable insights regarding faculty turnover intentions in Libyan public universities.

The target population comprises academic staff employed at public universities throughout Libya. According to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR, 2023), there are more than 22,000 faculty members across 27 public universities in the country. To ensure a representative sample that reflects the diversity of universities, faculties, academic ranks, and disciplines, a stratified random sampling method was employed. This approach allows for proportional representation across key strata within the population, enhancing the validity and generalizability of the findings.

Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, a minimum sample size of 377 was deemed sufficient for a population of 22,000. To mitigate potential non-response bias, a total of 450 questionnaires were distributed. The study achieved a high response rate of 89.3%, with 402 completed and valid questionnaires returned. This sample size meets the requirements

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for conducting advanced multivariate analyses, such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which necessitates at least 200 cases to provide reliable model estimations (Hair et al., 2019).

Data collection was conducted through both electronic and physical means. Questionnaires were sent via email to faculty members and also distributed in hard copy through university administrative offices to maximize reach and convenience. Participants were thoroughly briefed about the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and the confidentiality of their responses, ensuring ethical standards were upheld. Ethical approval was obtained from the research ethics committee of the affiliated institution prior to data collection, and formal permission was secured from the administrations of each participating university.

The instrument development process involved designing a structured questionnaire grounded in established scales from prior studies, tailored to the context of Libyan public universities. The survey included items measuring compensation, career development, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, perceived organisational support, and turnover intention. The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot test to verify clarity, reliability, and validity, with necessary adjustments made based on pilot feedback to optimize the instrument for the main study.

For data analysis, statistical software was employed to conduct descriptive statistics, reliability tests, correlation analyses, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This analytical approach allows for the examination of direct and indirect relationships among variables, including the mediating effect of job satisfaction and the moderating role of perceived organisational support. The use of SEM is particularly advantageous as it provides a comprehensive framework for testing complex models involving multiple constructs and interrelationships simultaneously.

Overall, this rigorous methodological approach, combining a robust sampling strategy, reliable measurement instruments, and sophisticated statistical analysis, provides a solid foundation for investigating the determinants of turnover intention among academic staff in Libyan public universities. The methodology ensures that the findings will be both valid and applicable, contributing valuable insights to the literature and informing policy interventions aimed at enhancing faculty retention in the context of Libya's higher education system.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section presents a comprehensive overview of the statistical analyses conducted to evaluate the proposed research hypotheses and test the conceptual model underlying the study. The analytical approach encompassed several steps, including descriptive statistics, reliability assessments, Pearson correlation analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), all executed through AMOS version 25.0. These methods were chosen to ensure a robust and rigorous examination of the relationships between compensation, career development, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, perceived organisational support, and turnover intention among academic staff in Libyan public universities.

The analysis commenced with descriptive statistics to provide a snapshot of the demographic characteristics of the respondents as well as their responses to the principal study variables. A total of 402 valid responses were included in the final dataset. The gender distribution revealed that

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58.2% of the respondents were male, while 41.8% were female, reflecting a somewhat balanced gender composition within the academic staff sampled. The educational qualifications of participants showed a predominance of highly qualified faculty members, with 72.6% holding PhD degrees. This was followed by 24.4% with Master's degrees, and a smaller fraction, 3.0%, possessing Bachelor's degrees. The data also showed that over half of the respondents (54.7%) had more than ten years of teaching experience, indicating that the sample comprised seasoned academics with considerable professional exposure. This demographic profile suggests that the sample is well-positioned to provide insightful and reliable perspectives on factors influencing turnover intentions within Libyan public universities.

Regarding the central constructs measured in the study, descriptive statistics indicated that respondents reported moderate levels of job satisfaction and perceived organisational support. These moderate levels may reflect a complex mix of positive and negative experiences among faculty members, potentially influenced by institutional conditions and the broader socio-economic environment in Libya. Interestingly, turnover intention was observed to be slightly below the mid-point on the scale used, suggesting a cautious but emerging concern among faculty about job stability and future employment within their institutions. This nuance underscores the importance of understanding the antecedents of turnover intention, especially in a context where faculty retention is critical for the sustainability and quality of higher education.

Following descriptive analyses, reliability testing was performed using Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the scales employed for each construct. According to Hair et al. (2019), a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable and indicative of reliable measurement instruments. In this study, all constructs, compensation, career development, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, turnover intention, and perceived organisational support, demonstrated Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding this threshold. This outcome confirms that the items within each scale consistently measure the same underlying construct, thereby supporting the dependability of the data collected and strengthening the validity of subsequent analyses.

Next, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to explore the bivariate relationships among the key study variables. The correlation matrix revealed several significant associations, with turnover intention exhibiting statistically significant negative correlations with compensation, career development, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived organisational support. Specifically, higher levels of compensation were associated with lower turnover intention, supporting the idea that adequate and fair remuneration is a critical factor in retaining academic staff. Similarly, career development opportunities, which encompass training, mentorship, and promotion prospects, were inversely related to turnover intentions, indicating that when faculty perceive clear pathways for professional growth, they are less inclined to leave their institutions. Organisational commitment, which reflects employees' psychological attachment and loyalty to their universities, also showed a negative correlation with turnover intention, underscoring its role as a strong retention factor.

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Job satisfaction was found to have a notably strong negative association with turnover intention, aligning with extensive literature that positions satisfaction as a key mediator between workplace conditions and employees' intentions to remain or leave (Chen et al., 2023; Hom et al., 2017). Perceived organisational support, or the extent to which faculty members feel valued and supported by their institutions, was likewise negatively correlated with turnover intention, reinforcing findings from prior research highlighting the importance of institutional care and recognition in employee retention. These initial correlations provide preliminary support for the conceptual framework of the study and justify further investigation through more sophisticated modeling techniques.

To assess the validity of the measurement model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted. This step was critical to confirm whether the observed data fit the hypothesized factor structure of the study constructs. The CFA results indicated a good overall model fit, with key fit indices meeting recommended thresholds: the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) was 2.37, indicating an acceptable model; the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.934, surpassing the 0.90 benchmark for good fit; the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.057, falling within the range considered indicative of a close fit; and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was 0.927, further supporting model adequacy. All item loadings onto their respective latent constructs exceeded 0.60, demonstrating strong convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). These results collectively affirm that the measurement instruments effectively capture the constructs they were designed to measure and provide a solid foundation for testing the hypothesized relationships.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was then employed to evaluate the proposed relationships between the study variables and test the research hypotheses. SEM is particularly suitable for simultaneously examining complex direct and indirect relationships among variables while accounting for measurement error. The structural model yielded an adequate fit to the data, as evidenced by fit indices including a χ^2/df ratio of 2.49, CFI of 0.926, RMSEA of 0.060, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) of 0.058. These values are within acceptable limits, suggesting that the specified model appropriately represents the data structure.

The SEM results demonstrated that compensation, career development, and organisational commitment all had significant positive effects on job satisfaction. This suggests that improvements in faculty compensation, enhanced opportunities for career growth, and stronger emotional and normative attachments to the institution increase academics' overall satisfaction with their jobs. Job satisfaction, in turn, exerted a strong negative influence on turnover intention, meaning that higher satisfaction significantly reduces the likelihood that faculty members intend to leave. Moreover, compensation, career development, and organisational commitment each had significant direct negative effects on turnover intention, independent of their effects on job satisfaction. These findings collectively indicate that these three antecedents not only foster job satisfaction but also independently reduce faculty turnover intentions. This pattern of results aligns with previous empirical studies such as those by Hussain et al. (2023) and Raharjo et al. (2022), further validating the theoretical underpinnings of the current research.

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Given the theoretical expectation that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between institutional factors and turnover intention, mediation analysis was conducted using bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples. Bootstrapping is a non-parametric resampling technique that allows for robust estimation of indirect effects and their confidence intervals. The analysis confirmed that job satisfaction partially mediates the effects of compensation, career development, and organisational commitment on turnover intention. The indirect effects were statistically significant, and the 95% confidence intervals did not include zero, satisfying the criteria for mediation proposed by Zhao et al. (2010). This indicates that part of the influence of compensation, career development, and organisational commitment on turnover intention operates through their impact on faculty members' job satisfaction. However, the persistence of significant direct effects suggests that these variables also influence turnover intention through other mechanisms not captured by job satisfaction alone.

Furthermore, the moderating role of perceived organisational support (POS) on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention was examined. Moderation analysis tested whether the strength or direction of the association between job satisfaction and turnover intention varies as a function of faculty members' perceptions of organisational support. The interaction term representing the product of job satisfaction and perceived organisational support was statistically significant, indicating that POS moderates this relationship. A subsequent simple slope analysis revealed that the negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention is stronger when perceived organisational support is high. In other words, faculty members who report both high satisfaction and high perceived support from their institutions exhibit the lowest intentions to leave. This finding emphasizes the buffering effect of organisational support, which can amplify the protective influence of job satisfaction against turnover intentions. Such a moderating effect is consistent with the work of Eisenberger et al. (1986), who highlighted the importance of employees' perceptions of organisational care and recognition in shaping their work attitudes and behaviors.

The comprehensive findings of this study have significant theoretical and practical implications. They substantiate Herzberg's (1959) motivation-hygiene theory, which asserts that compensation and career development serve as hygiene and motivational factors influencing job satisfaction and retention outcomes. The mediation role of job satisfaction aligns with Mobley's (1977) conceptual framework on turnover, which positions satisfaction as a crucial intermediary between job conditions and turnover decisions. Meanwhile, the moderation effect of perceived organisational support echoes Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) emphasis on institutional support as a key determinant of employee retention.

For Libyan public universities, these findings underscore the necessity of adopting multifaceted strategies to enhance faculty retention. Improving compensation packages to address salary disparities and inconsistencies could alleviate dissatisfaction and discourage faculty from seeking employment elsewhere. Simultaneously, expanding career development opportunities through structured training, mentorship programs, and clear promotion pathways can foster professional growth and commitment. Strengthening organisational commitment through participative

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governance, recognition programs, and enhancing academic autonomy may also cultivate deeper psychological attachment to institutions. Additionally, universities should prioritize initiatives that increase perceived organisational support, such as transparent communication, responsive leadership, and supportive administrative policies, as these factors not only directly influence turnover intention but also strengthen the protective effects of job satisfaction.

Therefore, this study's rigorous statistical analyses reveal a nuanced interplay among compensation, career development, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, perceived organisational support, and turnover intention among academic staff in Libyan public universities. By validating these relationships and highlighting the mediating and moderating mechanisms at play, the research provides a valuable evidence base to inform policy and practice aimed at mitigating faculty attrition and fostering a stable, motivated academic workforce.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study sought to investigate how compensation, career development, and organisational commitment influence turnover intention among academic staff in Libyan public universities. Additionally, it examined the role of job satisfaction as a mediator and perceived organisational support as a moderator within these relationships. Employing a quantitative cross-sectional design, data were collected from 402 faculty members spanning multiple institutions, providing robust empirical support for the proposed conceptual framework.

The results demonstrated that compensation, career development, and organisational commitment each have a significant impact on both job satisfaction and turnover intention. More specifically, faculty members who perceived higher compensation levels and greater opportunities for career advancement reported increased job satisfaction. This heightened satisfaction subsequently decreased their likelihood of intending to leave their institutions. Organisational commitment also showed a strong negative relationship with turnover intention, reaffirming the extensive literature indicating that employees with a greater sense of loyalty and attachment to their organisation are less prone to exit (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Hom et al., 2017). These findings highlight the dual pathways through which institutional factors can affect faculty retention: directly influencing turnover intention and indirectly via job satisfaction.

The study further validated the mediating function of job satisfaction, revealing that it partially explains how compensation, career development, and organisational commitment exert their influence on turnover intention. This mediation aligns with prior research, such as Hussain et al. (2023), which found that job satisfaction operates as a critical mechanism translating workplace conditions into decisions about employee retention. Hence, improvements in compensation and career growth do not just independently discourage turnover; they do so by fostering a more satisfying work environment, which in turn reduces the desire to leave.

Moreover, the research confirmed the moderating effect of perceived organisational support (POS) on the link between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Faculty members who felt genuinely valued and supported by their universities were significantly less likely to consider leaving, even when they experienced some degree of job dissatisfaction. This result resonates with the seminal

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work of Eisenberger et al. (1986), who emphasized that when employees perceive their organisation as caring and supportive, they develop a stronger emotional bond, which mitigates withdrawal behaviours. In practical terms, this suggests that institutions can buffer the negative effects of job dissatisfaction on retention by fostering a culture of support and recognition.

These findings are particularly relevant given the challenging context of Libyan higher education, which has faced numerous obstacles including socio-political instability, limited financial resources, and a concerning trend of brain drain. Understanding the factors that underpin faculty turnover in such a context contributes valuable theoretical insights into workforce dynamics in developing countries, while also offering practical guidance for university leaders and policymakers. By addressing compensation, career development, organisational commitment, and support, administrators can more effectively build and sustain a motivated and stable academic workforce.

From a managerial perspective, these findings imply that tackling academic turnover requires more than short-term reactive measures. Instead, institutions must adopt strategic, evidence-based human resource practices tailored to their unique environments. Compensation, for instance, emerged as a crucial determinant of both job satisfaction and turnover intention. Despite the financial constraints often faced by public sector universities, it is essential that these institutions strive to maintain fair and competitive compensation packages to retain qualified staff. This involves not only ensuring timely salary payments but also creating transparent incentive systems and, where feasible, providing additional allowances for research activities, transportation, and housing. When direct salary increases are limited by national budget restrictions, universities might consider non-monetary incentives such as formal recognition programs, funding for professional development, and the conferment of academic titles, all of which can improve morale and job satisfaction (Serang et al., 2023). Performance-based reward systems that link pay to measurable academic contributions could further align compensation with faculty achievements, fostering motivation and retention.

Equally important is investment in career development opportunities. The study highlighted how limited professional growth prospects often lead to stagnation and eventual turnover. Universities should therefore prioritize the establishment of clear, structured career pathways with transparent promotion criteria, alongside regular training workshops and support for faculty to obtain advanced qualifications. Encouraging attendance at national and international conferences and instituting mentorship programs that connect junior staff with experienced academics are also critical. Integrating career development into broader institutional strategies with defined timelines and measurable performance indicators ensures accountability and sustained support for faculty advancement (Kim, 2017; Raharjo et al., 2022).

Fostering organisational commitment constitutes another key retention strategy. Administrators can cultivate this by promoting shared governance, enhancing academic freedom, and nurturing a collegial culture. When faculty perceive alignment between their personal values and the institution’s mission, their emotional attachment and loyalty deepen, reducing the likelihood of turnover (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Enhancing communication channels between academic staff and

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senior management further reinforces trust and transparency. Regular open forums, departmental meetings, and faculty involvement in decision-making processes help build stronger organisational bonds and create a sense of belonging (Zhu et al., 2022).

Because job satisfaction mediates the effects of compensation, career development, and organisational commitment on turnover intention, it serves as a significant target for management interventions. University leadership should work to ensure manageable workloads, efficient administrative procedures, and supportive teaching and research environments. Faculty autonomy, recognition of achievements, and transformational leadership styles are vital factors shaping satisfaction (Spector, 1997; Orpina et al., 2022). Therefore, training for deans and department heads in leadership practices that foster engagement and support is crucial for sustaining job satisfaction and, by extension, retention.

The moderating effect of perceived organisational support underscores the importance of fostering a supportive institutional culture. When faculty feel appreciated and supported, even dissatisfaction with certain job aspects is less likely to translate into turnover intention. Efforts to enhance POS should include both tangible and intangible initiatives: acknowledging and celebrating academic achievements, providing emotional support during personal crises, ensuring equitable treatment, and maintaining responsive grievance redress mechanisms. Eisenberger et al. (1986) argued that perceived support cultivates reciprocal commitment from employees, which strengthens organisational loyalty and retention. Thus, faculty members need to perceive that their contributions are recognized and valued beyond just financial remuneration.

It is vital that retention strategies be contextualized to the unique realities of Libyan higher education. The sector operates under the pressures of political instability, resource shortages, and administrative fragmentation (MHESR, 2023). Hence, any proposed interventions must be realistic, phased, and sensitive to local conditions. While long-term goals such as infrastructure development and internationalisation remain important, short-term measures, like improving communication, enhancing transparency, and acknowledging staff contributions, can be implemented with minimal resources yet yield significant positive impact on faculty morale and retention.

Furthermore, universities should institutionalize evidence-based human resource management by regularly conducting staff satisfaction surveys, exit interviews, and performance evaluations. These tools offer critical feedback loops that enable the continuous monitoring of institutional health and the refinement of retention policies. Incorporating data analytics into HR practices can help predict turnover risks and facilitate targeted interventions to retain key talent (Hair et al., 2019).

Collaboration with government bodies and international donors is also essential. Public universities need to engage with the Ministry of Higher Education and foreign partners to secure increased funding, improved policy frameworks, and capacity-building support. National-level reforms, such as standardized promotion guidelines and salary scales, are necessary to promote fairness and consistency across the public university system.

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Moreover, this study highlights the imperative for Libyan public universities to adopt proactive and strategic approaches toward faculty retention. The intricate relationships among compensation, career development, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived organisational support illustrate that no single factor suffices to address the turnover challenge. Instead, a comprehensive model emphasizing motivation, institutional support, and professional growth is required to foster academic engagement and reduce turnover intentions.

This research not only enriches theoretical understanding of faculty turnover in developing country contexts but also lays a foundation for future studies. Subsequent research might explore longitudinal patterns of retention, incorporate qualitative insights to deepen contextual understanding, or investigate the roles of leadership and governance in shaping academic workforce stability. Amidst Libya's ongoing national rebuilding efforts, securing a stable, motivated, and committed academic workforce is essential, not only for the sustainability of higher education institutions but also for the broader educational and developmental aspirations of the country.

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