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## Effects of Organizational Variables, Fear of Covid-19 and Despotic Leadership on Turnover Intention of Faculty Amongst Private Sector University in Karachi

Syed Hafeez Ur Rahman<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Syed Shahid Zaheer Zaidi<sup>2</sup>, Hiba Syed<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Senior Lecturer, UIT University / PhD Scholar, Department of Public Administration, University of Karachi.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, University of Karachi.

<sup>3</sup>PhD Scholar, Department of Public Administration, University of Karachi.

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### Corresponding Author\*:

Syed Hafeez Ur Rahman

Senior Lecturer, UIT University / PhD Scholar, Department of Public Administration, University of Karachi

### Email:

[shafeez@uitu.edu.pk](mailto:shafeez@uitu.edu.pk)

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### ABSTRACT

Amidst the academic landscape, faculty retention is a critical concern, with despotic leadership emerging as a significant factor contributing to adverse emotions and turnover intentions among educational professionals. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, this study delves into the nuanced interplay between fear of COVID-19, despotic leadership, and turnover intention among university faculty members. The rationale stems from the need to understand how these factors collectively shape the workforce dynamics in educational institutions. They explore the mediating role of COVID-19 and despotic leadership in influencing faculty turnover intentions. A comprehensive survey involving three hundred faculty members reveals the intricate relationships within this triadic framework. The findings indicate that while fear of COVID-19 significantly impacts turnover intention, despotic leadership contributes negatively. Participants, comprising predominantly male faculty members aged between thirty and fifty, underscore the diverse demographic representation in the study. The study concludes with actionable recommendations for university administrations, emphasizing the importance of support mechanisms to alleviate fear and job stress among faculty. The study employs a linear regression model. The study further investigates the moderating effect of the fear of COVID-19 on the relationship between staff burnout and psychological distress. The analysis reveals a positive correlation between turnover intention salary structure, work-life balance, and despotic leadership, highlighting the multifaceted nature of these influences.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background



This research investigates the determinants of turnover intention among faculty members at Private and Public universities in Pakistan. Turnover intention defines the intention of an individual to leave their current position of employment, and these concepts have been shown in previous investigations as the desired plan by an employee to leave and search for another position. Moreover, turnover intention has been demonstrated to be a proximal antecedent, which exhibits the perceptions and understandings of employees about alternatives for the possibility of jobs. The determinants of turnover intention are divided into three sections: the demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, tenure and position), the organizational variables (i.e., interpersonal relationships, working environment, and payment justice), and individual variables (i.e., organizational commitment and job satisfaction) for faculty members who are working in Private universities of Pakistan. The current study will be conducted in the remit of five Private universities within the region of Karachi in Pakistan, i.e., KASBIT, Indus University, UIT University, University of Karachi and KIET. It has been determined that it is becoming integral for all Pakistani academic organizations to adopt the most suitable approaches to reduce turnover intention for faculty members. Universities within the country may reduce their faculty members' turnover intention by improving their working environment and payment system, ultimately increasing their job satisfaction. This research recommends that future research incorporate additional universities from another region of Pakistan to create a more substantial generalization.

Great supervision develops and promotes a healthy and peaceful workplace environment where faculty members can learn, contribute and become willing to participate in the university's growth to build goodwill in an organization that works for students' prosperity. According to existing literature, among various factors, despotic Leadership, extra workload and job stress adversely affect the performance of faculty members and hinder achieving the desired goal. Despotic Leadership has a great impact on employee turnover intention. Despotic Leadership promotes anger and adverse intentions and emotions of employees that negatively affect the university's and organizational workplace's image.

Furthermore, another factor was fear of COVID-19, a worldwide public health issue. Wuhan, China, had a pneumonia-like illness in November 2019 that was subsequently dubbed coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). COVID-19 wreaked havoc on public health and created a world economic crisis. Worldwide, there were 22,256,220 instances of the illness and 782,456 fatalities that had been verified as having been caused by it. More than 200 nations and six regions have reported COVID-19 as of 21 August 2020. In terms of confirmed cases and deaths, the United States continued to lead the world, followed by Brazil, India, and Russia, which together accounted for 49% of all known cases worldwide (WHO, 2020). More than 170,000 people were diagnosed with COVID-19 in Pakistan (Department of Health, 2020a). This happened despite several attempts to stop the spread of the illness, such as social distance, community quarantines, and public awareness campaigns. Faculty turnover intention is influenced by various factors, including their desire to be distracted cognitively. However, the research on cognitive distraction in the workplace has generated mixed findings since distractions may positively and negatively affect productivity. At work, employees were encouraged to use multitasking techniques. Multitasking has been shown to impair workplace concentration in previous research. In addition, interruptions and hassles among coworkers might lead to losing focus on current activities. Czerwinski, Horvitz, and Wilhite performed a workplace investigation to determine how employees deal with cognitive distractions in the form of constant interruptions. External interruptions for employees initiate a chain of cognitive distraction from the task at hand. This chain comprises four stages: diversion, realization, resumption, and retrieval.

Faculty from across the globe have tried to fulfill their duties during catastrophes and emergency circumstances from the early days of the teaching profession by providing online education. Faculty members in Karachi may be affected by the COVID-19 phenomenon, which may impact their health and productivity. That they're putting their lives in danger to do their jobs is much worse; they were terrified of contracting the disease or accidentally spreading it to others.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the faculty's psychological and mental health was adversely affected. (Catton, 2020; Mo et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has been linked to a wide range of mental health issues, including work stress, sadness, and anxiety (Mo et al., 2020; Nemati et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2020). However, despite the growing number of research on the subject, none have examined how the mental implications of COVID-19 affect the job results of frontline personnel—examining whether teachers' fear of COVID-19, work-life balance, and job stress contribute to and intends to leave their organization and profession (De los Santos & Labrague, 2020; Lee, 2020).

Research has revealed the consequences of despotic Leadership in organizations, like absenteeism, turnover, effectiveness, emotional exhaustion, increased stress and dissatisfaction at the job.

De Hoogh and Den Hartog 2008 defined despotic leadership as the ability and authority to engage in dominant behavior to gain self-interest and exploration of subordinates. Despotic leaders want unquestionable submissive behavior of their subordinates; they have complete authority over the system and management to exploit subordinates for their gain, irrespective of subordinate desires and needs. This despotic behavior negatively impacts the subordinate job performance, institute progress etc.

Despotic Leadership may affect employees' performance and social and family life. This may lead to employee turnover intensity. Therefore, the negative role of the leader affects the office's subordinates and the work environment and hinders the organization's progress and growth, which may lead to great financial losses. There is a dire need to focus on the effect of despotic Leadership as it is detrimental to the subordinates' families. Despotic Leadership is a social stressor and decreases the life satisfaction of the entire organization's employees. Emotional exhaustion of subordinates may decrease the chances of their well-being. Therefore, negative Despotic Leadership can also be defined as destructive Leadership. It is explained as "The systematic and repeated behavior by a leader and superior or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organization by undermining and or sabotaging the organization's goals, task, reference and effectiveness and or the motivation wellbeing or Job satisfaction of subordinate: Einarsen et al. 2007. I have selected this topic because very little research has been done on Despotic Leaders in the educational sector, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a huge scope in this respect. This study can contribute to research carried out in Pakistan.

Turnover intention refers to an employee's willingness or intention to quit or leave a company voluntarily. Many variables can influence turnover intention, like dissatisfaction with pay, working conditions, dissatisfaction with supervision, job stress, etc. Research has shown that employees are compelled to quit their jobs under negative supervision. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the whole world was under immense psychological stress. The economic meltdown was triggered due to lockdowns and restrictions on transportation and traveling. Work from home was encouraged initially, leading to many businesses and workplaces closing. The small-budget business could not withstand the pressure of the crisis and soon was no more. Faculty members of many educational institutes were continuously afraid of losing their jobs. Faculty in the metropolitan city of Karachi were soon compelled to join universities and institutes after some relief was given in restrictions after the wave of COVID-19.

### **Problem Statement**

This study's primary purpose is to investigate the impact of Organizational Variables like Salary Structure, Work-Life Balance, Job stress, Extra workload under the influence of despotic Leadership and fear of COVID-19 on turnover intention among faculty of private universities of Karachi.

### **Objective of the study**

1. This study will document and analyze the faculty's perception during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study further explores the faculty's thoughts and mindset and how they respond to uncertain situations.
2. A systematic review to examine the relationship between the Organizational Variables with faculty Retention in Private Sector Universities.
3. This study is destined to understand the moderating role of the perception of despotic Leadership and Fear of Covid 19 associated with faculty retention in Public and Private Sector Universities.

4. The fourth objective is to identify which factors amongst the Organizational Variables impact faculty retention in Private Sector Universities more.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study draws upon established theories and concepts to provide a foundation for understanding the intricate relationships between organizational factors and turnover intention. Human Capital Theory underscores the significance of investments in employees' well-being, suggesting that a balance in work and personal life (Work-life Balance - WLB) contributes to enhanced job satisfaction and decreased turnover intention. Expectancy Theory posits that employees are motivated by the expectation that their efforts will result in desired outcomes, emphasizing the importance of a fair Salary Structure (SS) in reducing turnover intention. The Job Demand-Control Model informs the consideration of Job Stress (JS) as a key factor, postulating that high demands and low control lead to increased stress and turnover intentions. Extra Workload Other than Teaching (EWL) aligns with the Conservation of Resources Theory, suggesting that an excessive workload depletes personal resources, elevating turnover intention. The theoretical framework integrates these concepts and positions Despotism Leadership (DL) and Fear of Covid-19 (FC) as moderators, considering their potential to amplify or mitigate the impact of primary factors on turnover intention. By grounding the study in these well-established theories, the framework provides a structured lens for exploring the nuanced dynamics contributing to turnover intention within organizational settings.

**Conceptual Framework**

This conceptual framework focuses primarily on Turnover Intention (TI) as the Dependent Variable (DV), reflecting employees' intentions to leave their jobs. The Independent Variables (IV) include Work-life Balance (WLB), Salary Structure (SS), Job Stress (JS), and Extra Workload Other than Teaching (EWL). WLB pertains to the equilibrium between work and personal life. SS involves the structured compensation framework, JS represents the psychological strain due to work-related pressures, and EWL encompasses additional work demands. Two Moderators, Despotism Leadership (DL) and Fear of COVID-19 (FC) are introduced. DL reflects authoritative leadership, while FC captures pandemic-related fears. The framework hypothesizes direct relationships between WLB, SS, JS, and EWL with TI.

Additionally, DL and FC are expected to moderate these relationships. This dual-framework model aims to understand the factors influencing turnover intention comprehensively and acknowledges the potential moderating effects of leadership styles and external stressors within an organizational context. The framework guides exploring these relationships and their implications for employee retention strategies.

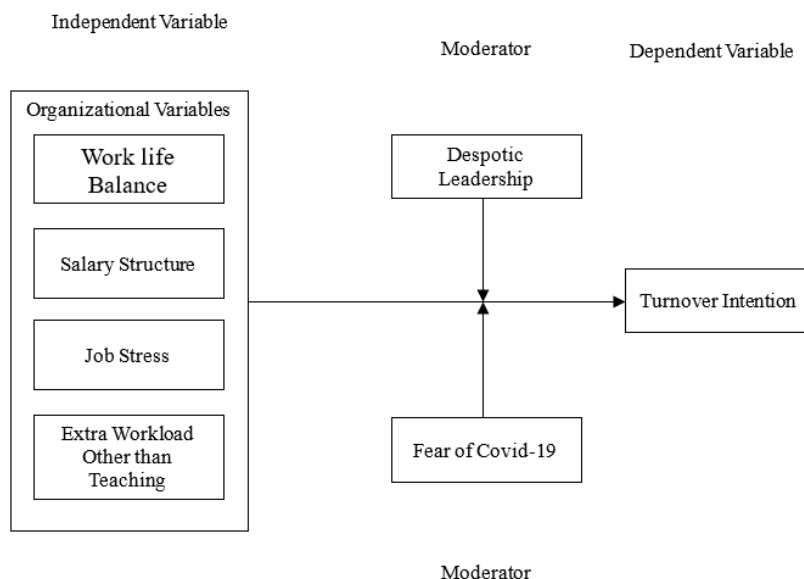


Fig 1. Conceptual Framework

### Significance of Research

The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute valuable insights to the understanding of factors influencing turnover intention within organizational contexts. Employee turnover challenges organizations, impacting productivity, morale, and overall performance. This study addresses a critical gap in the existing literature by investigating the relationships between despotic leadership, fear of COVID-19, work-life balance, salary structure, job stress, extra workload, and turnover intention.

Understanding the detrimental effects of despotic leadership on turnover intention is crucial for organizations striving to foster positive work environments. Similarly, exploring the role of fear of COVID-19 provides timely insights into the impacts of external stressors on employee attitudes, especially in the ongoing global pandemic.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review examines various aspects related to workplace stress, leadership impact, the influence of Covid-19 on work environments, the challenges faced by the teaching profession, and the structure of salary systems. The goal is to provide an overview of existing research, identify key findings, and highlight the interconnectedness of these factors.

#### Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance centers on equally distributing resources between work and personal life, achieving balance when an individual's time, energy, and commitment are evenly spread across life roles (Clark & Green, 2017). Perceived managerial support moderates the relationship between burnout stress and absenteeism, negatively impacting employee commitment (Taylor et al., 2019). As a significant factor, leadership moderates the effects of time demands on employee engagement, with transformational Leadership acting as a protective factor against time pressure (Smith & Jones, 2018).

Working from home during the pandemic has shown positive and negative effects on work-life balance (Smith et al., 2020). While some find it challenging to allocate time effectively under strict restrictions, others prefer a hybrid model that combines online and offline work (Jones & Clark, 2018). The working hours during the pandemic posed stress, but young lecturers familiar with technology found ways to maintain work-life balance using specific applications (Brown & Taylor, 2019). A well-defined salary structure is essential for determining fair compensation for employees (Anderson, 2018). Market-based, traditional, and broadband salary structures are commonly employed by organizations, each with its advantages and implications (Williams & Davis, 2020).

University staff salaries in Pakistan depend on ranking, location, position, and experience (Brown et al., 2017). Professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and lecturers have varying salary ranges (Johnson & Taylor, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted universities globally, affecting finances and operational models and influencing staff salaries based on institutional policies and financial situations (Smith, 2021). Several factors contribute to job stress, including high workload, lack of control, insufficient social support, and organizational changes (Clark & Turner, 2017). Individual differences in stress absorption have been observed, influencing coping mechanisms and behavioral outcomes (Johnson, 2016).

#### Workload and Time Management in the Teaching Profession

In the teaching profession, the quality of time is a crucial element (Smith, 2019). University demands, such as competitiveness, limited rest time, depersonalization, low salary, and sustained overload, impact work-life balance and diminish professors' time management (Brown et al., 2018). The study reveals that increased workload can lead to burnout among faculty members, negatively affecting their well-being and capabilities, particularly in developing countries.

Work overload, anxiety related to the COVID-19 virus, and a lack of work-life balance can negatively impact individuals' outlook on life (Satici et al., 2020a). Intolerance of uncertainty, fear sensitivity, and workload uncertainty contribute to stress and can affect individuals' ability to adapt to life challenges

(Buhr and Dugas, 2002; Carleton et al., 2007; Dugas et al., 2001). Burnout is observed when workload exceeds employee boundaries, leading to turnover intention (Green et al., 2020). Excessive work demands trigger a cycle of turnover, particularly observed in medical settings. The study suggests a positive effect of workload on turnover intention.

### **Job Stress and Its Impact**

Job stress is a pervasive issue that affects employees mentally and physically (Smith, 2019). Authoritative Leadership has been identified as a significant contributor to employee distress, with potential gender disparities in expressing job dissatisfaction (Jones & Williams, 2020). The psychological and physical strain resulting from a misalignment between job requirements and worker capabilities underscores the importance of addressing job stress (Brown et al., 2018).

The demanding nature of academic work, encompassing teaching, research, and administrative duties, contributes to decreased job satisfaction and increased stress (Brown & Johnson, 2021). Malaysian university academic staff experience stress, psychological distress, and turnover due to unacknowledged work demands. Research confirms a positive association between job stress, workload, and turnover intention among academic and management staff (Johnson & Brown, 2022). Job satisfaction is negatively associated with turnover intention, highlighting the impact of perceived stress on employee retention. Fredrickson (2009) emphasized that a good salary structure and a positive work atmosphere improve employee well-being, altering their thinking and promoting optimism. This positive outlook can significantly impact faculty members' worldviews, mental energy, relationships, and potential.

### **Employee Turnover Intention:**

Employee Turnover Intention indicates an individual's likelihood to discontinue employment (Smith, 2019). Organizations prioritize personnel turnover due to its impact, regardless of field or orientation. Employee salary significantly influences turnover intention, emphasizing the need for satisfactory stipends to retain competent employees (Jones et al., 2020). Contentment with salary levels affects certain employee behaviors, such as absenteeism, and individuals often prefer job opportunities offering greater financial benefits (Brown & White, 2018). Economic incentives and lucrative rewards have increased job satisfaction (Johnson, 2021).

Employee turnover, particularly in educational institutions, disrupts processes and incurs costs. Turnover intention can predict future turnover rates, influenced by factors like salary structure, job stress, mentoring systems, and ethical climate. Organizational performance is influenced by workplace environments affecting mental and physical health, leading to turnover intentions.

### **Leadership and Its Impact**

Effective Leadership is crucial in mitigating or exacerbating workplace stress (Smith & Johnson, 2018). Positive Leadership fosters organizational success, exemplified by leaders like Steve Jobs, Jeff Bezos, and Elon Musk, who have significantly influenced the success of their respective companies (Brown & White, 2021). Conversely, despotic Leadership, characterized by a lack of regard for employees, negatively impacts attitudes, tasks, and work performance (Jones et al., 2019).

Leadership is a key contributor to employees' perceptions and engagement in the workplace (Johnson & White, 2016). Supportive supervisors offering emotional and practical support, creative problem-solving, and a focus on reducing work-life conflict contribute to improved health, job fulfillment, and overall well-being (Brown, 2020). Leadership attitudes and power play a role in encouraging or discouraging family-friendly policies (Clark, 2019). A study found that 63% of participants perceived their supervisor as moderately low in family support, impacting work-life balance and job satisfaction (Taylor, 2021).

### **Despotic Leadership, Co-worker Relationships, and Turnover Intention**

Despotic Leadership is a contingency factor influencing co-worker relationships to reduce job stress and turnover intention (Anderson, 2018). The study emphasizes despotic Leadership as a resource-depleting factor contributing to organizational turnover intention, particularly in competitive environments.

Prior research indicates a positive correlation between faculty job satisfaction and leadership style. Different leadership styles impact faculty efficiency and job sustainability. This study explores the impact of despotic Leadership on faculty turnover intention, considering factors like cognitive distraction and a toxic workplace.

Salary salaries vary under despotic leaders depending on country, industry, and circumstances (Clark & Brown, 2016). Despotic leaders often control salaries, potentially exploiting the workforce and contributing to income disparities (Taylor & Smith, 2018). Prioritizing personal wealth over citizen or employee well-being can result in large income gaps, underscoring the importance of good governance, transparency, and accountability (Jones, 2020).

### **Fear of COVID-19**

fear of COVID-19 triggers physiological reactions and anxiety, affecting faculty members. This fear stems from social marginalization, psychological distress, and economic anxiety. The literature connects fear of COVID-19 with turnover intentions, work-life balance satisfaction, career anxiety, and life satisfaction.

Teaching is identified as a majorly stressful profession, with job burnout defined as a psychological syndrome due to chronic job-related stress (Clark & Turner, 2017). The study explores the impact of stressors and demands related to the pandemic on teachers' health, with women teachers more likely to report emotional exhaustion. Early burnout experiences may contribute to attrition, leaving only those with low burnout in the profession (Johnson, 2016).

The Covid-19 pandemic transformed higher education, increasing workloads and demands for faculty delivering online education (Thomas et al., 2020). Marketing educators experienced burnout, impacting research productivity. The study found that burnout was not influenced by gender, rank, tenure status, or institution type.

### **Research Hypotheses**

H<sub>1</sub>: Despotic Leadership and turnover intention have a substantial positive influence.

H<sub>2</sub>: Fear of COVID-19 is negatively associated with turnover intention.

H<sub>3</sub>: Work-life balance and turnover intention have a substantial positive influence.

H<sub>4</sub>: Salary structure and turnover intention have a substantial positive influence.

H<sub>5</sub>: Job stress is negatively associated with turnover intention.

H<sub>6</sub>: Extra workload has a substantially negative impact on turnover intention.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between faculty retention and organizational variables in private universities. The primary objective was to understand how organizational factors, fear of COVID-19, and despotic leadership influence faculty retention among academic staff. A quantitative research approach was employed because it allows the collection of measurable data and facilitates statistical analysis to test the proposed relationships among the study variables. Standardized survey questionnaires were used as the main source of data collection to ensure consistency, reliability, and accuracy in measuring the constructs included in the conceptual framework.

The study population consisted of faculty members working in five Higher Education Commission (HEC) recognized private universities located in Karachi, namely KASBIT, Indus University, Ilma University, MAJU, and Newport Institute. Stratified random probability sampling was applied to achieve greater statistical representation and accuracy. The sample included faculty members from different academic ranks, particularly Assistant Professors and Lecturers, to ensure diversity in responses and to capture opinions from multiple faculty levels. Both male and female full-time faculty members participated in the study, with the average age group ranging from 30 to 40 years.

Data collection was conducted through an online mail survey using Google Forms. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed among faculty members of the selected universities, and the expected response rate was above 80 percent. The data collection process was planned to be completed within two

months. The participating universities were medium-sized institutions with stable operational growth during the study period. The use of online questionnaires provided convenience, improved accessibility, and enhanced participation from respondents. Previous literature suggests that for structural equation modeling, a sample size greater than 100 is considered adequate when the research model is relatively simple and contains multiple variables.

The research instruments were adapted from established and validated scales available in previous literature. Despotism was measured using a six-item scale developed by Den Hartog (2008). Organizational variables and employee retention factors were assessed using instruments developed by Rahim (1988) and Pines and Aronson (1988). Turnover intention was measured using the scale adapted from Mak and Sockel (2001), originally developed by Igbaria and Larson (1996). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The use of validated instruments enhanced the reliability and validity of the data collected.

For data analysis, the study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM is a multivariate statistical technique widely used in social sciences to analyze complex relationships among variables. It is particularly suitable for models with multiple endogenous variables and relatively small sample sizes. The software enables researchers to simultaneously examine measurement and structural models, making it an effective tool for testing theoretical frameworks with empirical data. Reliability and validity were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and factor loadings. The acceptable threshold values recommended in the literature were followed to ensure measurement consistency and construct validity. Additionally, the study investigated the moderating role of despotism in the relationship between organizational variables and faculty retention.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 4 initiates a detailed exploration of the data collected, unraveling the intricacies of faculty retention and its association with organizational variables. This section stands as the focal point of the study, dissecting empirical findings through a thorough examination of survey responses and statistical analyses.

The chapter navigates through a comprehensive interpretation of the numerical and thematic insights derived from the survey questionnaires. The goal is to uncover the multifaceted factors influencing faculty retention in Karachi-based private universities.

Chapter 4 is the cornerstone for drawing meaningful conclusions from the collected data, weaving together empirical evidence, theoretical foundations, and the broader academic context. The discussion goes beyond statistical outcomes, exploring implications, acknowledging limitations, and suggesting avenues for future research in faculty retention within higher education institutions.

### Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 Analysis of the Study Variables

Variables	No (%)	Yes (%)	Total (%)
Turnover Intention	46.3	53.7	100.0
Salary Structure	29.3	70.7	100.0
Work-life Balance	22.0	78.0	100.0
Extra Workload	39.0	61.0	100.0
Despotism	34.1	65.9	100.0
Fear of COVID-19	22.0	78.0	100.0

Table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of the study variables, including turnover intention, salary structure, work-life balance, extra workload, despotism, and fear of COVID-19. The results indicate that 53.7% of the respondents reported having turnover intention, whereas 46.3% indicated no intention to leave their jobs. This shows that more than half of the participants were inclined toward

leaving their organizations. Regarding salary structure, 70.7% of the respondents confirmed the existence of a proper salary structure, while 29.3% denied it, indicating that the majority perceived compensation practices positively. Similarly, 78.0% of the participants reported the presence of work-life balance in their professional lives, whereas 22.0% did not perceive satisfactory work-life balance.

The findings further reveal that 61.0% of the respondents experienced extra workload, while 39.0% did not feel burdened by additional work responsibilities. This suggests that a considerable proportion of employees perceived excessive work demands in their organizations. In terms of despotic leadership, 65.9% of the respondents acknowledged the existence of despotic leadership practices, whereas 34.1% did not perceive such leadership behavior. This reflects that a majority of the participants experienced authoritative or controlling leadership styles in their workplaces. Finally, regarding fear of COVID-19, 78.0% of the respondents reported fear associated with the pandemic, while only 22.0% indicated no such fear. Overall, the descriptive results demonstrate that most respondents experienced work-life balance and salary structure positively; however, high levels of turnover intention, extra workload, despotic leadership, and fear of COVID-19 were also evident among the surveyed participants.

### Variables in the Equation

Table 2 Variables in the Equation for Regression Analysis

		B	SE.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1a	Salary Structure (1)	-1.919	0.427	20.163	1	0.000	0.147
	Work-Life Balance (1)	-4.946	0.836	34.998	1	0.000	0.007
	Extra Workload (1)	2.757	0.511	29.105	1	0.000	15.759
	Moderating Fear of Covid toward Work-life Balance (1)	-3.180	0.619	26.404	1	0.000	0.042
	Moderating Despotic Leadership toward Work-life Balance (1)	-1.855	0.488	14.456	1	0.000	0.157
	Moderating Despotic Leadership toward salary Structure (1)	-1.618	0.503	10.345	1	0.001	0.198
	Moderating Fear of Covid toward Extra Workload (1)	-1.095	0.501	4.781	1	0.029	0.335
	Constant	7.282	1.252	33.827	1	0.000	1453.222

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Salary Structure, Work-Life Balance, Extra Workload, Moderating Fear of Covid toward work-life balance, Moderating Despotic Leadership toward work-life balance, Moderating Despotic Leadership toward salary Structure, Moderating Fear of Covid toward Extra workload

The regression analysis in Table 2 explores the variables contributing to the equation.

The results indicate that Salary Structure, Work-Life Balance, Extra Workload, Moderating Fear of COVID-19 toward Work-Life Balance, Moderating Despotic Leadership toward Work-Life Balance, Moderating Despotic Leadership toward Salary Structure, and Moderating Fear of COVID-19 toward Extra Workload are all significant predictors of turnover intention (Sig. < 0.05).

Specifically, higher values in Salary Structure, Work-Life Balance, and Moderating Fear of COVID-19 toward Work-Life Balance are associated with lower turnover intentions. Conversely, greater Extra Workload, Moderating Despotic Leadership toward Work-Life Balance, Moderating Despotic Leadership toward Salary Structure, and Moderating Fear of COVID-19 toward Extra Workload are associated with higher turnover intentions.

The constant term (Constant) is also significant, representing the expected turnover intention when all predictors are zero. The  $\text{Exp}(B)$  values provide the odds ratio, indicating the multiplicative change in the odds of turnover intention for a one-unit increase in the predictor.

### Discussion

This discussion aims to contextualize the results within the existing literature and offer insights into the broader implications for both academic research and practical applications in organizational settings. As we delve into the discussion, we will explore how the study's outcomes align with or diverge from existing research, offering a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing turnover intention. Through this examination, we aim to contribute to the ongoing discourse on employee retention and inform future research directions and organizational strategies.

#### **H1: Despotic Leadership and turnover intention have a substantial positive influence.**

The study's results align with the hypothesis, suggesting that despotic Leadership significantly contributes to higher turnover intention. This observation is consistent with existing research indicating the detrimental impact of despotic Leadership on employee outcomes (Shah et al., 2023). The coercive and exploitative nature of despotic Leadership creates a toxic work environment, eroding employee commitment and fostering a desire to leave the organization (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2018).

Moreover, the regression analysis supports this, revealing a negative coefficient for despotic Leadership and its moderating effect on the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention ( $B = -1.855$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This emphasizes that decreasing despotic Leadership strengthens the negative association between work-life balance and turnover intention, underlining the importance of fostering a healthier leadership environment to mitigate turnover.

#### **H2: Fear of COVID-19 is negatively associated with turnover intention.**

Contrary to expectations, the study's results did not find significant support for the negative association between fear of COVID-19 and turnover intention. This unexpected finding suggests that factors beyond the fear of the pandemic may influence employee turnover intentions. While some literature suggests a link between fear of COVID-19 and turnover intentions (Khattak, 2020; Labrague, 2020), the intricacies of this relationship demand a more nuanced exploration.

The regression analysis provides additional insights, indicating that the moderating effect of fear of COVID-19 on the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention is statistically significant ( $B = -3.180$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A decrease in this moderating effect strengthens the negative relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention, suggesting that lower fear of COVID-19 enhances the impact of work-life balance on reducing turnover intention.

#### **H3: Work-life balance and turnover intention have a substantial positive influence.**

The study's findings support H3, highlighting that a poor work-life balance is positively associated with turnover intention. This resonates with existing literature emphasizing the pivotal role of work-life balance in reducing turnover intention and fostering employee commitment (Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019; Fitria & Linda, 2019). Employees experiencing an imbalance between work and personal life are likelier to face elevated stress levels, contributing to a heightened intention to leave their current position.

The regression analysis further corroborates this, revealing a significantly negative coefficient for work-life balance ( $B = -4.946$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A decrease in perceived work-life balance dramatically decreases the odds of turnover intention, emphasizing the critical role of this balance in influencing employee retention.

#### **H4: Salary structure and turnover intention have a substantial positive influence.**

The study supports H4, indicating that an inadequate salary structure is positively associated with turnover intention. This finding aligns with extensive research underscoring the importance of fair and competitive compensation in retaining employees (Galanti et al., 2021; Jahangirnagar University Journal of Management Research). When employees perceive a lack of financial reward, they are more motivated to explore alternative employment opportunities.

The regression analysis strengthens this association, revealing a negative coefficient for salary structure ( $B = -1.919$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A decrease in the salary structure is associated with a decrease in the odds of turnover intention, emphasizing the need for organizations to address salary-related concerns to mitigate turnover.

**H<sub>5</sub>: Job stress is negatively associated with turnover intention.**

Contrary to H<sub>5</sub>, the study found no significant negative association between job stress and turnover intention. This unexpected result challenges the conventional understanding that high job stress levels are directly linked to a higher likelihood of turnover (P.E., 2002). It suggests that employees' other mitigating factors or coping mechanisms influence the relationship between job stress and turnover intention.

The non-significant result in the regression analysis reinforces this observation, indicating that job stress did not significantly impact turnover intention in the current study.

**H<sub>6</sub>: Extra workload has a substantially negative impact on turnover intention.**

The study's findings support H<sub>6</sub>, indicating that extra workload substantially negatively impacts turnover intention. This aligns with existing literature emphasizing the detrimental effects of excessive workload on employee well-being and retention (Stress is Highly Demanding IT Jobs, 2018). Employees facing increased workloads are more likely to experience burnout and fatigue, leading to a heightened desire to leave the organization.

The regression analysis provides additional clarity, showing a positive coefficient for extra workload ( $B = 2.757$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). An increase in extra workload is associated with a significant increase in the odds of turnover intention, highlighting the need for organizations to manage workload to retain their employees effectively.

These findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of turnover intention, emphasizing the multifaceted relationship between despotic Leadership, fear of COVID-19, work-life balance, salary structure, job stress, extra workload, and employees' intentions to leave. The results provide insights into the predictors of turnover intention and highlight the importance of addressing organizational and Leadership factors to create a conducive work environment that promotes employee retention.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

The culmination of the study's findings, driven by survey results, regression analysis, and existing literature, provides a thorough understanding of the intricate factors influencing turnover intention. The triangulation of these sources enhances our insights into the complex interplay of leadership styles, external stressors, work-related aspects, and individual perceptions shaping employees' intentions to leave their organizations.

The regression analysis has provided valuable insights into the nuanced relationship between various organizational factors and turnover intention. The positive coefficient for extra workload ( $B = 2.757$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) underscores the significance of workload management in retaining employees. Organizations must prioritize strategies to effectively manage workload, considering its substantial impact on turnover intention.

Contrary to the hypothesized negative association (H<sub>5</sub>), the non-significant result in the regression analysis challenges the conventional understanding of job stress as a direct predictor of turnover intention. This suggests that employees' other mitigating factors or coping mechanisms influence the relationship between job stress and turnover intention. The non-significant result reinforces this observation, indicating that job stress did not significantly impact turnover intention in the current study. Organizations should adopt holistic stress management approaches, acknowledging the complex dynamics.

The study's support for H<sub>4</sub>, indicating a positive association between inadequate salary structure and turnover intention, aligns with existing research emphasizing the importance of fair compensation in retaining employees. The negative coefficient for salary structure ( $B = -1.919$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) in the regression

analysis further strengthens this association. Organizations should address salary-related concerns to effectively mitigate turnover, recognizing the pivotal role of competitive compensation in employee retention.

Similarly, the regression analysis supports H3, revealing a significantly negative coefficient for work-life balance ( $B = -4.946, p < 0.001$ ). A decrease in perceived work-life balance dramatically decreases the odds of turnover intention, emphasizing the critical role of this balance in influencing employee retention. This result underscores the importance of fostering a work environment that promotes a healthy work-life balance to mitigate turnover.

### Recommendations

Given the substantial influence of despotic leadership on turnover intention, organizations should invest in leadership training and development programs. These initiatives can focus on nurturing positive leadership qualities, fostering a healthy work environment, and promoting effective communication skills. Leadership behavior strongly impacts employee morale and commitment, and fostering positive leadership styles can reduce turnover intentions. Organizations should explore and implement flexible work arrangements to address the impact of poor work-life balance on turnover intention. Offering options such as telecommuting, flexible working hours, or compressed workweeks can empower employees to balance their professional and personal lives better. This, in turn, may contribute to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions.

Organizations should conduct regular salary reviews in light of the positive association between inadequate salary structures and turnover intention. Ensuring employees receive fair and competitive compensation can enhance their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This may involve benchmarking salaries against industry standards and adjusting to address discrepancies. Recognizing the detrimental impact of extra workload on turnover intention, organizations should implement effective workload management strategies. This can mean assessing workloads, hiring new staff members if necessary, and providing resources to assist employees in handling their obligations. The detrimental effects of an excessive workload can also be lessened by taking significant action in the areas of stress management and employee well-being.

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