

# Turnover Intention among Lecturers in Private Universities Tanzania: Is the Question of Job Satisfaction?

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## **Abstract:**

*The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of job satisfaction on turnover intention among lecturers in private universities in Tanzania. Specifically, the study intended to examine the effect of pay towards labour turnover intention, ascertain how workload affects labour turnover intention, and assess the contribution of work environment towards labour turnover intention. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design. The sample of the study was 132 academicians, drawn using simple random sampling technique. The data were collected using a close-ended questionnaire and analysed using multiple linear regression analysis. The findings show that pay has a negative relationship with labour turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.247$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The result implies that increase in pay results in a 0.247 decrease in turnover intention among lecturers. Moreover results reveal that workload has a positive relationship with labour turnover intention ( $\beta = 0.246$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The result infers that increase in workload results in 0.246 an increase in turnover intention among lecturers. Similarly, the finding indicates that work environment has a negative relationship with lecturers' turnover intention ( $\beta = -0.586$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The results suggest that a more favourable work environment is associated with a decrease of 0.586 in turnover intention among lecturers. The study concludes that pay, workload, and work environment are related with turnover intention among lecturers in private universities in Tanzania. The study recommends a review of the current pay structure and enhancement of the characteristics of the work environment in order to lower turnover intention among lecturers. A study on job satisfaction due to work environment and labour turnover intention among lecturers is suggested.*

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Lecturers, Private Universities, Turnover Intention.

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## 1. Introduction

The question of labour turnover intention among employees in Tanzania is not new as for many years researchers have studied it in Local Government Authorities (LGAs), in banking industries as well as in education institutions (Muhoho, 2018; Theodory, 2017; Ngatuni and Matoka, 2018). Komba (2016) and Ngatuni (2020) reported that the lecturers' turnover intention in higher learning institutions in Tanzania is alarming as the magnitude is on the increase and therefore has become a major issue among management practitioners to ensure institutions prosper and survive following low academic staff capacity (Ainer, 2018); Ngatuni and Matoka, 2020). The increase in academicians quitting means knowledge and experiences essential for competitive advantages are also quitted (Zahra, 2019). Also, it means deterioration of universities' competence and an increased threat to the institutions' survival (Ramasamy, 2020). Chabayo (2017) said that a high unhealthy academic staff turnover rate is unhealthy for smooth running of higher learning institutions as it affects the growth and customer satisfaction at the workplace.

According to Nyahongo (2015), between the years 2009-2013 at the University of Dodoma, 102 academic staff quitted out of 840 academicians in the University. Similarly, Komba (2020) reported that, in Tanzania public universities, the tendency of academic staff to quit from one institution to another has recently become common. He reported that, from 2015 to 2020, thirty (30) lecturers from the University of Dar es Salaam moved to other institutions. Similarly, 34 lecturers from Dar es Salaam University College of Education also left for other institutions and 8 lectures from Mkwawa University College of Education moved to other universities. The situation seems to be unhealthy in academic institutions in Tanzania. With regard to the level of turnover intention among academic staff in Tanzania, William (2018) argues that in private institutions the situation is worse than in public institutions. It is, therefore, important to address factors that lead to lectures' turnover intention in private Universities in Tanzania.

According to Chacha and Matoka (2020), turnover intention among academicians in Tanzania's public institutions is due to job satisfaction and affective commitment. Makafu (2017) reported that lecturers' turnover intention is due to job dissatisfaction with issues related to working conditions, infrastructure, and remuneration. Similarly, Amon (2016) found that turnover intention among academic staff in public universities in Tanzania is due to a lack of social support and administrations. In the same vein, Mkumbo (2014) mentioned lack of support and workload as factors connected to turnover intention among lecturers in universities in Tanzania. Similarly, Mkumbo (2014)

found that lecturers in private universities are more satisfied with working conditions than those in public universities in Tanzania: 63% and 55% respectively. Masanja (2018), in contrary, found that lecturers in private universities in Tanzania said that they were strongly dissatisfied with work conditions, which were unfavourable ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 0.275$ ). Labour turnover intention among lecturers is, therefore, seen as an outcome of lecturers' dissatisfaction with unfavourable work conditions. It is worth to note that addressing dissatisfaction factors can help improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover intention.

Mkulu (2017) argued that, for effectively retaining academic staff in private universities in South Highland Zone Tanzania, factors such as work environment and administrative factors are crucial. Moreover, Mkulu (2017) emphasizes that recognition from management, opportunities to learn new skills, scholarship for lecturers and financial assistance once attained can reduce the magnitude of lecturers' turnover intention. Skills development and management support are among of work factors that were also emphasized on for retention purposes. Administrative aspects such as work environment, provision of timely remunerations, timely promotion, and workload reduction were also recommended. According to Gupta (2012), delayed motivation is not motivation. Perhaps lecturers' turnover intention is due to delay of administrative factors. Ndalaha (2018) suggests that private universities in Tanzania should focus on improving remunerations and leadership as well as career promotion and advancement for the purpose of ensuring lecturers stay in their institutions.

Earlier studies on job satisfaction and lecturers' turnover intention in both public and private universities in Tanzania have been conducted despite the findings indicating varying job satisfaction levels among the academic staff in public and private universities in Tanzania (Mkumbo, 2014; Msuya, 2022) and, therefore, job dissatisfaction among lecturers has been documented. Moreover, debate exists on the factors connected to labour turnover in private universities in Tanzania where there is a higher rate of academic staff turnover unlike in public institutions (William, 2018). Numerous factors were documented to be among of the factors that are connected to labour turnover intention among lecturers in Tanzania. Some of the factors are such as lack of social and management support, unfavourable working conditions, administrative factors such as opportunity to learn new skills, recognition from management, financial assistance, remuneration, timely promotion, huge workload and the like (Mkumbo, 2014; Amon, 2016; Mkulu, 2017; and Masanja 2018), but the literature does not precisely identify factors that contribute to lecturers turnover intention among

lecturers in private universities in Tanzania. It is therefore, worth to conduct a study on job satisfaction and labour turnover intention in private universities in order to determine factors contributing to labour turnover intention among private universities in Tanzania. This study, therefore, determines role of job satisfaction factors (pay, workload and work environment) on labour turnover intention. It is worth, however, conducting a study on turnover intention among lecturers in order to bridge the knowledge gap that exists on the factors associated with labour turnover intention in private universities in Tanzania as such studies are particularly scarce. On the other hand, this study is worthwhile to the management of both public and private universities in Tanzania in overcoming academic staff performance and turnover intention that hamper institutions' success and that ensure institution competency, survival and prospers. The objectives of the study were to examine the effect of pay towards labour turnover intention, ascertain how workload affects labour turnover intention, and assess the contribution of work environment towards labour turnover intention.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Equity Theory**

According to Armstrong (2009), the equity theory was propounded by John Stacey Adams in 1963. The theory is concerned with people's perceptions of how they are treated in comparison with the reference group. The theory clarifies the employee's perception of equality in social exchange relationships, based on the perception of one's input and output in relation to the output of other employees in order to promote social justice in the work environment perceived from one's contributions compared to others' contribution and output (Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2022). The theory is also concerned with perceptions employees have about fairness in terms of procedures in the areas of, for instance, performance appraisal, promotion and discipline. Hence, the theory assumes that once employees are treated equally, they become satisfied, and the vice versa.

Similarly, Noe et al. (2006) posit that the equity theory is the theory of fairness. The theory evaluates employees' fairness in terms of pay decisions and perceived outcomes which are measured in form of pay, benefits and working environment that are guided by work policies once compared with others. The theory suggests that if pay decisions and perceived outcomes are imbalanced, turnover intention might occur (Noe et al., 2006). On the other hand, he also comments on the consequences of equity perception to be attraction and retention of qualified employees, among others. Therefore, managing employees' compensation is the main implication of the theory as employees evaluate their pay by comparing it with what other employees get from other organizations. In the present study,

equity was evaluated using pay, workload and work environment acquired by lecturers in private institutions in comparison with lectures in public institutions.

Aswathappa (2011) believes that employees are exchanging their services for pay and other benefits. The theory assumes individuals are motivated by their desire for equal treatment in a working relationship. The theory tries to postulate outcomes employees expect from the services offered. The perceived outcome, for instance job security and incentives, are therefore part of benefits, promotions, salary, recognitions and working conditions, which employees expect to get for their work contribution. Therefore, the theory emphasizes on fair treatment, based on one's contribution.

The theory emphasizes that it is that difficulty to predict employees' inequality factors that may force someone to determine fairness and inequality, and decide to quit the job in relation to others. Thus, criteria that are treated to one's inequality and that force one to quit the job are contrary among employees. Moreover, it is argued that it is difficult to predict employees' behaviour due to individual differences and unpredictability of the human being (Aswathappa, 2011).

## **2.2 Job Satisfaction Due to Pay and Intention to Quit**

Maliki (2012) reveals that, in Pakistani Higher Education Institutions, pay has a significant influence on labour turnover intention. He further claims that the situation is not only at the Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan but also in most of other third-world countries. Again, Bello and Alhyasat (2020), in Saudi Arabia, found that fair compensation practices are important in diminishing labour turnover intention. Similarly, Mabaso and Dlamini (2017), in the South African context, found a positive and significant effect of compensation on intention to quit ( $p = 0.263$ ) among academic staff in Higher Education Institutions. Nonetheless, Moloantoa and Dorasamy (2017) found that salary is among the factors affecting academicians' job satisfaction and that if it is not good it increases labour turnover intention among lecturers in the National University of Lesotho. The literature, therefore, reveals that pay is an important factor in minimizing employees' turnover intention (Mabaso and Dlamini, 2017; Moloantoa and Dorasamy, 2017). Masanja (2018) found that lecturers' turnover intention in private universities in Tanzania is due to low payment ( $M = 4.73$ ,  $SD = 0.218$ ). Further, the study recommended provision of attractive remuneration packages to lecturers in order to reduce unpredictable work environment outcomes. This study, therefore, examines the effect of pay towards labour turnover intention among lecturers in private universities in Tanzania.

### **2.3 Job Satisfaction Due to Workload and Intention to Quit**

According to researchers, workload is also allied to be connected with labour turnover. For instance, Gull and Akhtar (2019) found that there is a strong and positive correlation between teachers' workload and labour turnover intention ( $r = 0.67, p \leq 0.05$ ). The findings reveal that a higher level of teachers' workload is linked with higher levels of teachers' turnover intention as high workload triggers teachers job satisfaction. On the other hand, Osifila and Abimbola (2020) show that, in Nigeria, lecturers' turnover intention is due to increase in the students' population in the universities that further increases lecturers' workload. The study recommended recruitment of assistant lecturers to faculties whose students' populations are higher for the purpose of reducing lectures' workload turnover intention among lectures. On contrary, Aoru (2014) found that, at Makerere University, the workload was not connected to turnover intention. Similarly, Masanja (2018) found that turnover intention among lecturers in private universities in Tanzania was also due to other factors than work overloaded ( $M = 2.32, SD = 0.365$ ). The present study, therefore, intended to determine the relationship between workload and turnover intention among lecturers in private universities in Tanzania.

### **2.4 Job satisfaction Due to Work Environment and Intention to Quit**

The level of job satisfaction among academic staff in Hong Kong universities is revealed by Zhang, Fu & Li (2020) to be very low among university lectures. This signifies that the level of intention to quit among lecturers is very high due to unpleasing work environment. In their study, Tiwari & Tiwari (2020) found that work environment factors are related to turnover intention as revealed by the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.57; p = 0.000$ ). The finding, therefore, emphasizes working conditions should not be neglected as far as turnover is concerned. Moreover, the findings indicate that 57% of the variation in turnover intention among academic staff in private universities in India is explained by work environment such as recognition, teamwork, salary policy, and commitment while the remaining per cent is explained by supervision role, growth opportunities and other factors which were not included in this study. Tansel (2022) reported turnover intention related to academicians in German universities is measured in terms of work environment factors such as pay, achievement and supervisors' respect. In Russia, Kacane et al. (2019) found that work environment factors; like quality of leadership decision, leadership support, professional development, rewards and incentives; are allied to increase in turnover intention among members of academic staff in Russian Federation universities. Nonetheless, Mgaiwa (2021) found that work environment factors

such as academic freedom, participation in the decision, teamwork and supervision are good predictors of lecturers' turnover intention in Tanzania. Similarly, Masanja (2018) found that lecturers in private universities in Tanzania strongly agreed that turnover intention among them was due to unfavourable work conditions ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 0.275$ ). He further argued that low remuneration, job security and career development were pushing factors triggering turnover intention among lecturers. The findings of this study have implications for the management and governance of universities not limited to private universities in Tanzania as intention to quit is crucial as it limits work performance and employees' commitment among lecturers. This study, therefore, assessed the contribution of working environment towards turnover intention among lecturers in private universities in Tanzania.

**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework



**Source:** Mgaiwa (2021) & Soliman, et al. (2023).

### 3. Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The population of the study comprised academicians from two private universities in the Southern Highland region of Tanzania. The universities were purposively selected. This study was carried out there since labour turnover is a serious problem faced by several organizations including educational institutions in the southern highlands of Tanzania. A sample size of 132 respondents was drawn from a population of 213 academicians. A Krejcie and Morgan's 1970 table of sampling determination was adopted in determining the study's sample size. From the population, respondents were randomly drawn using simple random sampling. Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire, the time frame being from Spector (1997), to measure three constructs of job satisfaction, namely pay, workload and work environment. The variables in the questionnaire were measured using a 5-point Likert scale which comprised items to each of which the respondents were required to reply 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, or 5 = Strongly Agree. Labour turnover intention items were adopted from Windon et al. (2019) and comprised active job searches, thoughts of quitting, and

job dissatisfaction. To each of the items, the respondents were also required to reply to 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, or 5 = Strongly Agree. Descriptive statistics were applied in the study to analyse demographic characteristics of the respondents. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine significant levels among independent variables. The dependent and independent variables' relevant items from each variable were added up to form the summative composite variables utilized in multiple regression analysis. Further, multiple linear regression analysis was used in determining the effect of job satisfaction towards turnover intention among lecturers in the study.

## 4. Finding and Discussion

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

In this study, 107 respondents from private universities in the Southern Highland region of Tanzania managed to return duly filled out questionnaire copies. The findings show that the majority of the study respondents were in the age group of 31-40 (n = 49, or 45.8%), while male representatives (n = 69, or 64.5%) exceeded female representatives (n = 38, or 35.5%). Moreover, the findings indicate that most of the respondents had Master's Degrees (n = 73, or 68.2%), had been in the service between 6 and 9 years (n = 62, or 57.9%) and were married (n = 76, or 71%).

### 4.2 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was performed to determine the significance level among independent variables measuring lecturers' turnover intention in order to identify variables that could be used for further exploration. The results in Table 1 show that pay (r = 0.516, p < 0.01), workload (r = 0.503, p < 0.01) and work environment (r = 0.708, p < 0.01) were significantly correlated with labour turnover intention at the 0.01 significance level and, therefore, could be allowed for further exploration.

**Table 1:** Correlation between the independent variables and labour turnover intention

	(P)	(WL)	(WE)	(LTI)
Pay (P)	1			
Workload (WL)	0.312**	1		
Work Environment (WE)	0.445**	0.415**	1	
Labour Turnover Intention (LTI)	0.516**	0.503**	0.708**	1

**Source: Researcher (2023)**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



### 4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

The effects of job satisfaction on labour turnover intention among lecturers were examined using multiple regression analysis. The results of the coefficient of determination in Table 2 show that  $R^2 = 0.648$ . The findings indicate that 64.8% of the labour turnover intention among lecturers in this study was explained by job satisfaction factors employed in the model (pay, workload and work environment). Moreover, the overall model indicates that job satisfaction factors had a statistically significant effect on labour turnover intention ( $F(3) = 48.114$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ).

Further, the results demonstrate that pay had  $\beta = -0.247$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The results indicate that pay had a negative relationship with labour turnover intention. The negative relationship implies higher levels of pay are connected with lower turnover intention among lecturers. Moreover, the finding shows that pay explained about 24.7% of the variation of turnover intention among lectures, and the model had power to predict turnover intention at the 0.05 level of significance. This result implies that a unit increase in pay would result in 0.247 unit of decrease in turnover intention among lecturers. Perhaps, the result justifies that lecturers in private sectors are paid lower than in public institutions something that increases their quitting intention to look for other employment where they expect more pay. There is a likelihood of low payment in private sector because of tight labour market. Thus, the management can bargain to the lowest as possible in order to realize more profit. Since one is in need of the job then one can accept the offer, but after sometime of working with the private universities they start looking for another employment opportunity to realize higher payment. The present study's findings concur with findings of a study by Moloantoa and Dorasamy (2017) who found that pay was among the factors allied with increasing lecturers' turnover intention at the National University of Lesotho. Similarly, Masanja (2018) found that lecturers' turnover intention in private universities in Tanzania is due to low payment ( $M = 4.73$ ,  $SD = 0.218$ ). Therefore, in order to reduce turnover intention among lecturers in private universities in Tanzania, it is advised to review and change the current pay structure, improve the pay and benefits package provided to lecturers in private institutions to make them more competitive and in line with current labour market.

Results for workload revealed  $\beta = 0.246$  and  $p < 0.01$ . The results show that workload had a positive relationship with labour turnover intention. The positive relationship suggests that higher workload is connected with higher turnover intention among lecturers. The finding also reveals that workload explained

24.6% of the variation in turnover intention among lectures, and the model had the power to predict turnover intention at the 0.01 level of significance. The result infers that a unit increase in workload would result in 0.246 unit increase in turnover intention among lecturers. Possibly, the results give an implication that, in the private sector, there is a higher workload due to increase in number of students as a result of free secondary education policy by the government since 2016. There is a claim that the free education policy in Tanzania has led to increase in number of students in universities as well as workload for lecturers. The situation limits lecturers' time to engage in other activities and therefore heightens lecturers' intention to quit. The present study's findings concur with findings by Gull and Akhtar (2019) who found a strong and positive correlation between teachers' workload and labour turnover intention ( $r = 0.67, p \leq 0.05$ ); a higher level of teachers' workload is linked with higher levels of teachers' turnover intention. Therefore, it is important to manage workload by hiring new lecturers, engaging part-timers lecturers, issuing contracts to workers and re-categorizing the existing workers in order to reduce turnover intention among lecturers. By so doing, the institutions create positive work environment that improves lecturers' job satisfaction and that reduces turnover rates among lecturers.

Findings regarding work environment revealed  $\beta = -0.586$  and  $p < 0.001$ . The results indicate that work environment had a negative relationship with lecturers' turnover intention. The negative relationship indicates favourable work environment is connected with lower turnover intention among lecturers. Moreover, the finding illustrates that work environment explained about 58.6% of the variation of turnover intention among lectures, and the model had power to predict turnover intention at the 0.001 level of significance. The results suggest that a more favourable work environment was associated with a decrease of 0.586 units in turnover intention among lecturers. Maybe the result shows that work environment in private universities in Tanzania is not attractive due to lack of necessary work conditions such as recognition, teamwork, commitment, good supervision, leadership support, growth opportunities, rewards and other incentives, job security and the like. These findings concur with the findings by Kacane et al. (2019), Tiwari & Tiwari (2020) and Mgaiwa (2021), who similarly found that work environment is the main contributor to labour turnover intention among lecturers in private universities. Therefore, it is crucial to improve aspects of the workplace environment such as corporate culture, interpersonal relationships, and physical work environment. By doing this, the organization can lower turnover while fostering a friendly work atmosphere for lecturers.

**Table 2: Regression results on the effect of job satisfaction towards labour turnover intention among lecturers**

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients ( $\beta$ )	Standardized Coefficients ( $\beta$ )	Sig
Pay	-0.161	-0.247	.011*
Workload	0.165	0.246	.010**
Work Environment	-0.462	-0.586	.001***
R <sup>2</sup> = 0.648, F (3) = 48.114, p = 0.023			

**Source:** Researcher, (2023).

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , and \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that pay negatively affect labour turnover intention among lecturers in private universities in Tanzania. The result implies that increasing pay levels to lecturers is linked with degreasing turnover level among lecturers. Management is, therefore, advised to review the current pay structure to improve pay and benefits to reduce turnover intention among lecturers and make private universities more competitive.

The study also concludes that workload positively contributes to labour turnover intention among lecturers in Tanzania. Thus increasing workload to lecturers is connected with increasing turnover intention among lecturers. Management of the institutions is advised to manage workload by employing new academics, inviting part-time lecturers, issuing contracts to employees, and re-categorizing qualified supporting staff in order to lower turnover intention among lecturers.

Moreover, from the study, it is concluded that the work environment has a negative relationship with the lecturers' turnover intention. Thus more favourable work environment is connected with lower turnover intention. Management, therefore, is urged to enhance the characteristics of the work environment to make the work environment favourable for lecturers. A study on job satisfaction due to work environment and labour turnover intention among lecturers is suggested in order to enrich the information on job satisfaction and work environment antecedents with regard to lecturers' turnover intentions.

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