

# Unveiling the Drivers Behind Academicians' Turnover Intentions in Selected Private Higher Institutions in Klang Valley, Malaysia: Investigating the Role of Gender as a Moderator

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## Abstract

Turnover intention is a crucial factor in predicting actual turnover (Falahat et al., 2019). The ability to understand the determinants of turnover intentions is vital since it will lead to actual turnover. The purpose of this research is to assess factors influencing academicians turnover intention in selected local private higher institutions in Klang Valley. Included in this study are one dependent variable (turnover intentions), two independent variables (intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation) and one moderator (gender). The quantitative approach of analysis using data gathered by questionnaire distribution among samples was used in this study. This study assesses the direct relationship between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and turnover intentions. In this study, primary data will be employed, and a survey questionnaire that had been adopted and modified from earlier studies is used to gather the data. SPSS 22.0 and Smartpls version 4 software were used for the direct and indirect links and testing of model hypotheses. This study provides additional knowledge and an approach to the factors influencing turnover intentions among academicians in Klang Valley.

**Keywords:** Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Turnover Intentions, Gender, Private Higher Institutions.

## Introduction

Turnover intentions and retention are major problems for organizations in the dynamic modern workplace, as they can negatively impact both growth potential and operational effectiveness. According to Munir and Tobi (2020), turnover problems are becoming a major worry in developing countries like Malaysia, and the current situation necessitates creative fixes and immediate interventions to protect the health of the organization.

According to a number of reports, Malaysia is having significant problems with turnover. According to a research released by The Malaysian Reserve 2021, during the first half of 2019, the voluntary employee turnover rate in different industries was 6.5%. This situation also occurs in the education sector, where there is a significant turnover rate among academic staff, especially in several universities (Halid et al., 2020). As stated by Harun & Ahmad (2022) the education sector had an average turnover rate of 29.2% in 2020, as reported by the data from the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), with both new and senior lecturers having particularly high turnover rates. Educational institutions in Malaysia are nevertheless plagued by the ongoing problem of excessive turnover among academic professionals (Feng & Angeline, 2010). In comparison to their counterparts at public universities, the number of academic staff members at private institutions has significantly decreased, according to data from the (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia Statistics, 2019). In addition, in 2019, academic staff at private institutions experienced an average 25% turnover rate, based on data released by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE).

Academics are burdened with numerous tasks within the academic ecosystem, as stated by (Halid et al., 2020). Masirin (2021), president of the Malaysian Academic Association Congress (MAAC), explained that this phenomenon is caused by the changing nature of lecturers' jobs, which include duties like internationalization, revenue generation, upholding their professional reputations, and fostering relationships with businesses. In light of the current status of the education sector, where a university's ranking and rating are significant factors that attract students and sponsors, Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Malaysia must prioritize their staff retention tactics (Aust et al., 2020).

High intentions to leave an organization cause major losses and impede the accomplishment of crucial business goals (Kamau et al., 2021). Ramlawati et al (2021) claim that because turnover has an impact on productivity and service quality across industries, it presents serious obstacles to sustainable HRM practices. When a highly skilled individual leaves the organization, it affects the commitment, overall aim, profitability, and performance (Muzaffar and Javed, 2021; Kakar et al., 2022). Furthermore, an institution's reputation and the calibre of the work it does may suffer from the loss of outstanding academicians (Khan & Osman, 2024).

Another difficulty is that, despite significant turnover in the academic workforce in Malaysia's education sector, academicians at PHEIs still have a poor understanding of this issue. Furthermore, there aren't many studies linking employees' demographics to their intention to leave their jobs, which is another gap in the literature. Nonetheless, only a small number of researches examined the influence of gender, specifically its function as a moderator in increasing or decreasing turnover intention.

Academicians' intents to leave private higher education institutions is a complex problem. Given these difficulties, the study attempts to pinpoint the underlying causes of these issues and offer potential fixes. In the end, this research can strengthen the academic education environment in Malaysia by assisting the faculty and departments providing information for policy decision-making. This study aims to evaluate the relationship between turnover intentions, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation among academicians at local private higher education institutions, using gender as a moderator.

## Literature Review

### *Underpinning Theory*

The Herzberg Two-factor theory serves as the foundation framework for this study. The motivation-hygiene hypothesis, or the two-factor model of work motivation, was first presented by Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman in 1959. Herzberg developed a two-part framework to comprehend the elements affecting people's opinions about their jobs. While extrinsic motivation was linked to factors including working conditions, job security, compensation, and fringe benefits, Herzberg et al (1959) found a variety of independent variables for intrinsic drive, including the content of work, recognition, responsibility, and growth prospects. According to Herzberg (1966), when one of the two-factor theories is inadequate, employees are more likely to leave their job. Thus, in order to predict both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and gain insight into turnover intentions, Herzberg's two-factor approach is utilized.

The study presents gender as a moderator, recognizing that gender moderates the effects of both extrinsic and intrinsic incentive on turnover intentions. This careful examination of the theory in light of the difficult problems with academic turnover in private higher education institutions offers a solid theoretical framework for examining these relationships.

### *Relationship between Intrinsic Motivation, Turnover Intentions & Gender*

Alam and Asim (2019) found that intrinsic factors play a major role in determining job happiness or discontent as well as an employee's intention to stay with or leave the company. The intention to leave a work could be influenced by intrinsic factors, and this has a positive and significant correlation with employee retention. As stated by Anwar and associates (2018). These findings imply that intrinsic factors, like job nature, opportunities for personal development, and recognition, have a strong positive impact on job satisfaction, support workers' aspirations to remain in their current positions, and show a strong positive correlation with staff retention.

Intrinsically satisfied workers are more likely to be at ease at work and to be more dedicated to assisting in the accomplishment of organizational goals, which lowers absenteeism and boosts employee morale, according to (Obiekwe et al., 2019). A study by Thanuja et al (2016) among instructors in Malaysian private universities found a strong link between low intrinsic motivation and plans to leave the field. The findings of a different study by Goo et al (2018), which showed a favorable correlation between academicians' work in Malaysian institutions and turnover intentions, which support this claim. According to research conducted on Taiwanese hospitality workers by Aaron et al (2019), gender influenced the associations between perceived variety and job satisfaction, and the relationships between intrinsic motivation and turnover intentions. Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: There is a relationship between intrinsic motivation and turnover intentions among academicians in local private higher education institutions

H2: There is a moderating effect of gender on the relationship between intrinsic motivation and turnover intentions among academicians in local private higher education institutions

*Relationship between Extrinsic motivation, Turnover intention & Gender*

According to a prior study, workers are less likely to leave their jobs if they feel that their autonomy is encouraged (Gagne, 2020). The results of a study conducted by Pratama et al (2021) on the workers of PT Febri Dharma Mandiri, an Indonesian cleaning service, showed that factors like pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, working procedures, co-workers, nature of work, and communication were significantly correlated with the intention to leave. Hosen (2022) found that employee turnover and the rewards system had either no significant positive correlation or a less significant positive link. The study was done among employees of multinational corporations (MNCs) in Malaysia. Study by Goo et al (2018), reported that many Malaysian institutions lack of proper remuneration structures to suit the needs of their academic personnel. Consequently, high turnover rates among academic personnel are probably a result of employee discontent with remuneration schemes. According to a study by McNeilly and Goldsm'th (2017) on 138 salespeople, there is a trend for both men and women to quit their current sales jobs because they are not happy with extrinsic variables related to different facets of the industry. The relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions was examined by Luma et al (2020), along with the potential moderating role of gender in Malaysia's health sector. It was discovered that gender influenced the (positive) relationship between work satisfaction and employee turnout, with a stronger effect observed in women. Given the above, the following hypotheses were proposed:

- H3: There is a relationship between extrinsic motivation and turnover intention among academicians in local private higher education institutions
- H4: There is a moderating effect of gender on the relationship between extrinsic motivation and turnover intentions among academicians in local private higher education institutions

Figure 1 shows the research framework for this study. This study includes intrinsic motivation (IM), Extrinsic motivation (EM) as independent, Gender as moderating and Turnover intentions (TI) as dependent variable.

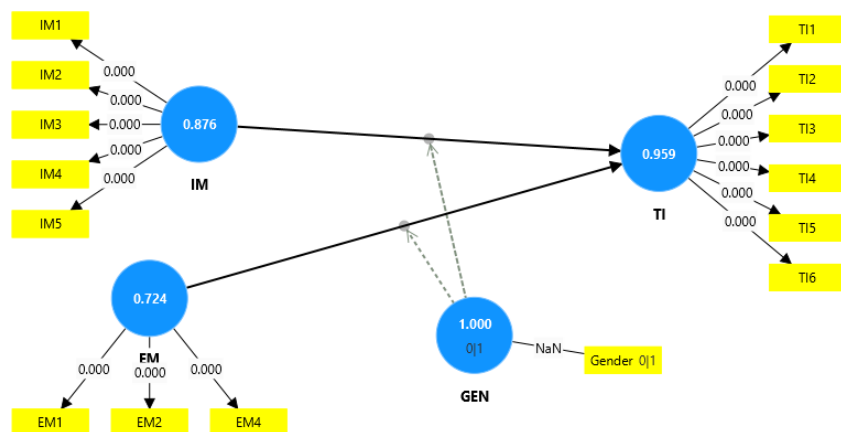


Figure 1: Research Model

**Methodology**

This study sought to assess academics in selected local PHEIs in Klang Valley. To achieve this objective, researchers conducted a survey to collect primary data, meticulously examining previous research to select reliable and valid measurements. The survey questionnaires were then emailed to selected participants, utilizing simple random sampling technique. A total of 22 variables were scrutinized, including exogenous variables such as intrinsic motivation, using 6 items Ryan & Deci (2000b); Kuvaas & Dysvik (2009); extrinsic motivation, assessed with 6 items (Ryan & Deci (2000b)); while the dependent variable was turnover intentions via 10 items by (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Brashear et al., 2003; Lichtenstein, et al., 2004; Roodt, 2004b:1).

Each construct's components were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with strongly disagree to strongly agree as the response options. 447 of the 750 surveys that were distributed were collected; this yielded a response rate of 60%, which is deemed adequate for using structural equation modeling, or SEM, in data analysis. 402 of the surveys that were gathered were deemed clean and appropriate for analysis. The researchers chose the well-known structural equation modeling (SEM) program Smartpls4 for data analysis and hypothesis testing. This decision was motivated by the software's strong evaluation features and adeptness with multivariate data analysis, which matched the goals of the study and, as the recommendations made by (Ringle et al., 2022). Smartpls4 was invaluable in thoroughly examining hypotheses and conducting comprehensive multivariate data analysis, facilitating a thorough examination of both measurement and structural models.

### **Respondents' Profile**

The respondents' gender distribution shows that, at 52% of the sample, there are significantly more men than women (48%). Potential differences in the engagement of male and female academicians are reflected in this gender representation, which encourages more investigation into gender dynamics within the study. The age group of 36–45 years old accounts for the largest percentage (43.5%), indicating a sizable presence of professionals in the middle of their careers. The incorporation of individuals from diverse age cohorts, such as those under 35 and over 55, enhances the overall comprehension of turnover intentions during different career stages.

The data on years of service data show that respondents' levels of experience differed widely. 50% of the cohort have worked for more than ten years, which is a significant share and suggests a moderate level of expertise. 66 percent of the respondents are Senior Lecturers, suggesting that experienced academics make up the majority of the sample. Associate Professors (15.9%) and Lecturers (14.9%) were particularly prevalent which the seniority and diversity of the respondents' academic hierarchy are highlighted by this distribution.

### **Data Analysis**

#### *Multicollinearity test*

Two widely used techniques for identifying multicollinearity are the variance inflation factor (VIF) and the tolerance value. These metrics show the extent to which one independent variable can be explained by another. Tolerance values of 0.10, or a VIF of 10, are frequently used as cut-off values (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Table 1 demonstrates that multicollinearity is not a concern because the VIF and tolerance value are below the recommended standards. Therefore, in this analysis, the main assumptions of multicollinearity are not violated.

Table 1

*Multicollinearity test*

Independent Variable	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Intrinsic motivation	0.74	1.36
Extrinsic motivation	0.69	1.44

**Measurement Model**

The measurement assessment method suggested by Hair et al (2017) was used in this work to evaluate measurements that were both first- and second-order. Finding items whose loadings were less than 0.7 was the main goal.

The composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) minimal cut-off values were reached by all three components. According to Hair et al (2017), the findings showed that every AVE value surpassed 0.5, with values ranging from 0.652 to 0.697. This proved that convergent validity had been established. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha (CR) values were higher than 0.7, ranging from 0.724 to 0.959, and CR for all constructions exceeded 0.7, ranging from 0.882 to 0.947 (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Construct Reliability & Validity*

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
EM	0.724	0.882	0.652
IM	0.876	0.92	0.697
TI	0.959	0.947	0.62

The researchers then assessed cross-loadings to make sure that each construct was accurately represented and measured by its corresponding items in order to determine discriminant validity (Table 3). Then, Henseler et al (2016) suggested using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio as a criterion for evaluating discriminant validity in Variance-Based Structural Equation Modelling (VB-SEM). Table 4 displays the HTMT ratios for the constructs together with the original sample. The bias-corrected and accelerated bootstrap confidence intervals stayed below 1, confirming adherence to discriminant validity, and these values were below the 0.85 threshold. This analysis further strengthened confidence in the distinctiveness of the constructs and their ability to effectively measure various aspects of the phenomenon under investigation.



Table 3

*Cross Loadings*

	<b>EM</b>	<b>IM</b>	<b>TI</b>
EM1	<b>0.75</b>	-0.23	-0.23
EM2	<b>0.88</b>	-0.24	-0.37
EM4	<b>0.82</b>	-0.29	-0.33
IM1	-0.19	<b>0.79</b>	0.55
IM2	-0.27	<b>0.79</b>	0.53
IM3	-0.24	<b>0.88</b>	0.62
IM4	-0.24	<b>0.88</b>	0.55
IM5	-0.18	<b>0.83</b>	0.51
TI1	-0.32	0.51	<b>0.85</b>
TI2	-0.31	0.63	<b>0.84</b>
TI3	-0.32	0.65	<b>0.82</b>
TI4	-0.22	0.36	<b>0.67</b>
TI5	-0.45	0.42	<b>0.77</b>
TI6	-0.36	0.49	<b>0.84</b>

Table 4

*Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)*

	Extrinsic motivation	Intrinsic motivation	Turnover intention
Extrinsic motivation			
Intrinsic motivation	0.317		
Turnover intention	0.434	0.712	

**Structural Model**

In this work, the structural model was evaluated by simultaneously analyzing pathway coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ), following the procedures described by (Hair et al., 2017). The Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique was utilized, utilizing 5000 subsamples to establish the significance level of path coefficients.

Table 5 displays the outcomes of the hypothesis tests, including confidence intervals, path coefficients (beta), related t-statistics, and p-values. This in-depth examination offers insightful information about the importance and resilience of the links between the variables incorporated into the structural model.

H1 proposed that intrinsic motivation has a relationship with turnover intention. The beta coefficient for intrinsic motivation (IM) influencing turnover intentions (TI) is 0.08, with a t-statistic of 1.71 and a p-value of 0.088. The t-statistic indicates that the relationship is not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ), supporting rejecting the null hypothesis. This implies that intrinsic motivation not significantly influence their intention to quit. Therefore, H1 was rejected.

H2 suggested that gender moderated the relationship between IM and TI. The statistical analysis result showed a beta of 0.32, a t-statistic of 3.69, and a p-value of 0.000. The high positive beta and significant t-statistic indicate a strong and significant relationship. Therefore, H2 was supported.

For H3, it was proposed that a relationship between extrinsic motivation (EM) and turnover intentions exists. The statistical result showed the relationship between EM and TI and the beta is -0.39, the t-statistic is 7.65, and the p-value is 0.000. The low beta and significant t-statistic suggest a strong and significant relationship between EM and TI. Hence, H2 was supported.

H4 suggested that gender moderated the relationship between EM and TI. The statistical analysis result showed a beta of 0.33, a t-statistic of 4.89, and a p-value of 0.000. The high positive beta and significant t-statistic indicate a strong and significant relationship. Therefore, H4 was supported.

The conducted analysis in this research provided robust evidence supporting the majority of the hypotheses, confirming the established connections among the scrutinized variables.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	t-value	f <sup>2</sup>	LLCI	ULCI	P Values	Result
					2.5%	97.5%		
H1	Intrinsic motivation → Turnover Intention	0.08	1.71	0.01	-0.01	0.17	0.088	Not supported
H2	Intrinsic motivation*Gender → Turnover Intention	0.32	3.69		0.51	0.48	0.000	Supported
H3	Extrinsic motivation → Turnover Intention	-0.39	7.65	0.14	-0.51	-0.31	0.000	Supported
H4	Extrinsic motivation*Gender → Turnover Intention	0.33	4.89		0.19	0.46	0.000	Supported

Table 5

#### *Hypotheses Testing Results*

The intrinsic Value Inflation Factor (VIF) values was evaluated to confirm the structural model's dependability. All of the values were determined to be below the generous criterion of 5, with the highest value being 3.81 (Table 6). This low degree of collinearity makes it easier to compare magnitudes in a meaningful way and to understand the model's coefficients.

In accordance with the methods described by Shmueli et al (2016, 2019), an out-of-sample predictive analysis was carried out using the PLSpredict technique in order to assess the model's ability to draw inferences and provide managerial recommendations. The Q2 predict are shown in Table 7, where values greater than 0 signify that the PLS-SEM predictions outperformed the results of the standard naïve mean predictions.

To further emphasize the predictive power of the suggested model, the Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) values corresponding to the PLS-SEM predictions showed lower values in four of the six cases than those obtained from the Linear Model (LM) prediction benchmark (see Table 7). These results add to the structural model's credibility as a reliable source of accurate projections and insightful guidance for managerial decision-making.



Table 6

*Inner VIF*

Variables	TI (VIF)
IM	3.38
EM	3.81
GEN	1.03

Table 7

*PLSpredicts*

	Q <sup>2</sup> Predict	PLS-SEM_RMSE	LM_RMSE	PLS - LM
TI1	0.49	0.64	0.65	-0.008
TI2	0.46	0.62	0.63	-0.014
TI3	0.45	0.60	0.61	-0.004
TI4	0.38	0.79	0.73	0.058
TI5	0.35	0.74	0.78	-0.035
TI6	0.31	0.93	0.75	0.181

### Discussion & Conclusion

Academics at private universities face a range of difficulties that highlight how difficult it can be to succeed in the academic environment in such a setting. These obstacles include a scarcity of funding for research, the risk that teaching will take priority over research, the requirement for higher student enrolment and retention rates, and increased competition for grants from external sources. The difficulties faced by academicians in private universities create a complex environment where the pursuit of academic excellence may be impeded, institutional reputation may be impacted, and the overall academic environment may be characterized by a slight balance between educational priorities and research aspirations. Therefore, this study that focused on the long-debated issue of turnover intentions in the context of academicians. Turnover intention cases are not necessarily intentional as the findings show that turnover intention cases are mainly due to extrinsic motivation factors.

### Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications are extensive and make a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge already known about human resource management, especially as it relates to higher education. First off, the study adds to our knowledge of the variables affecting academicians' intentions to leave their jobs. The links between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and turnover intentions that have been found provide a clear understanding of the complex, dynamics decisions about turnover intentions. Current models of turnover intentions gain depth with the inclusion of gender as a moderator in the theoretical framework, which highlights the crucial role that people's intents to quit play. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to consider the particular circumstances of private higher education institutions when analyzing turnover intentions. The academic environment introduces specific challenges and opportunities that influence the academicians' intentions to quit job. Theoretical frameworks and models developed within this study can serve as a foundation for future research endeavours, providing a more tailored and contextually relevant understanding of turnover intentions in educational settings.

### **Practical Implications**

The practical implications of the above study carry substantial value for higher education institutions by helping universities and the government as a whole to better serve academicians, thus, this study benefits both parties. The results of this study can assist key stakeholders in refining and creating a plan that will satisfy academicians and lower turnover rates, as well as aiding institutions and the government in policymaking. The findings of this study can also help the academics' management body and the human resources department better comprehend the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and academicians' intention to leave. It is crucial that retention initiatives start on the academician's first day of work for this reason. So, the administration of the university should expand and improve the academicians' orientation process since the orientation process has proven to be able to influence prospective workers' perceptions of the workplace culture.

### **Contextual Implications**

The study's contextual implications call for a thorough investigation of the ways in which academicians' likelihood of considering leaving their positions is influenced by various forms of motivation, both intrinsic (such as personal fulfillment, intellectual stimulation, and a passion for teaching) and extrinsic (such as pay, benefits, job security, and work environment). The study intends to determine whether and how these motivational factors affect male and female academicians differently by using gender as a moderating variable. This could show patterns and nuances that are unique to one gender over the other. This can offer insightful information on the distinct requirements and difficulties faced by male and female faculty members, enabling academic institutions to create more focused and successful retention plans. Ultimately, these findings could help institutions enhance job satisfaction, foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment, and reduce turnover rates among their academic staff, thereby contributing to the stability and quality of higher education in the region.

### **Suggestions for Future Studies**

Other data collection techniques (such as interviews or experiments) may be used in future study, and the outcomes may differ from those of a survey. Instead of being constrained by the statements and questions included in a questionnaire, the interview approach enables the respondents to express their thoughts and impressions in their own words. Second, research in the future might take the shape of a longitudinal study, in which a comparison over a number of years might produce findings that differ from those obtained during the study's current time frame. A longitudinal study can be utilized by researchers to investigate the reasons and elements that contribute to the evolution of academicians' intents over time.

### **Conclusion**

This study offers information on the factor academicians from the selected PHEIs in Malaysia's Klang Valley use to assess their intention to leave their current positions. The study discovered that, when it came to academicians' turnover intentions, extrinsic motivation had the greatest influence, followed by intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, it appeared that gender would be best applied to concerns around turnover intention. Future researchers will gain from this outcome by incorporating these elements in the literature on turnover intentions.

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