

## The Effect of Employability and Job Satisfaction on the Turnover Intention of Higher Vocational Graduates in Shandong China

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### Abstract

The graduates of China's higher vocational education programs are extremely important to the country's overall human resource situation. A huge number of human resources for China's economic development have been provided by vocational education, which has also encouraged the country's overall social and economic development in the new era of China's comprehensive creation of a socialist modern country. However, the rate of employee turnover for graduates of higher vocational schools is 10% higher than the national level half a year after graduation. In this study, 400 higher vocational graduates in Shandong Province were selected to conduct a structured questionnaire survey. Partial least squares structural equation model (PLS-SEM) and Smart-PLS software were used to analyze the measured data and structural model. This study finds that employability and job satisfaction have an impact on the turnover intention of higher vocational graduates. Employability influences turnover intention through the mediating effect of job satisfaction. This study is an extension of the study of turnover intention in China.

**Keywords:** Employability, Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intention, Smart-PLS

### Introduction

Higher vocational graduates are in high demand in the labor market because to their strong hands-on ability, rapid employment, and close relationship between their majors and local economic development (Gao, 2019). However, in contrast to their popularity in the job market, higher vocational college graduates have a relatively high turnover rate following employment. Higher vocational graduates have a 10% higher half-year turnover rate than the national average and a 20% higher turnover rate than undergraduate colleges (MCS Research Institute, 2014-2018). Only 25% of higher vocational graduates have not changed employers in three years in the last five years, 60% have changed 2-3 employers in three years, 9% have

changed four employers, and 7% have five or more employers in three years (MCS Research Institute, 2014-2018).

As far as the society is concerned, post-employment graduates of higher vocational colleges face the problem of re-employment and starting a business. However, students of higher vocational colleges do not have obvious advantages in social competition. It may affect social stability and add greater employment pressure to society (Zhang, 2014).

## **Literature Review**

### **Turnover Intention**

“Voluntary employee turnover” is one of the most studied behaviors in management research (Saleh et al., 2023; Griffeth et al., 2000; Hom & Kinicki, 2001; March & Simon, 1958). The many multivariate models and empirical tests within this research stream have greatly enhanced knowledge about quitting. Turnover process models focus on how individuals arrive at their final decisions to quit, while turnover content models focus on why individuals quit organizations.

Cohen, et al (2016) pointed out that turnover studies have traditionally looked at the intent of turnover rather than actual turnover. These studies hypothesized that turnover intentions can also be a good proxy for and predict employees' actual turnover behavior.

According to Hossain et al., 2018; Aladwan et al (2013), turnover intention is a predictor of actual employee turnover. Another advantage of employing turnover intention rather than actual turnover rate is that intention is easier to foresee than turnover and can be controlled by individuals (Shore and Martin, 1989). One advantage of utilizing turnover intention rather than actual turnover rate is this. According to Maertz and Campion (2004), the bulk of employee turnover models may be classified into two types: turnover process models and turnover content models.

Turnover process models focus on the sequence of steps employees go through during the process of quitting, such as developing feelings of dissatisfaction, thinking about quitting, searching for alternative employment, and then quitting their current jobs. On the other hand, content models focus on factors that cause employees to quit, incorporating constructs such as attributes of the job, organization, and individual as well as alternative opportunities (Hom et al., 2012). Finally, some models include both the process and content.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Locke (1969) proposed the famous “facet theory”, which defined job satisfaction as an individual’s overall evaluation of feelings and attitudes towards different aspects of work. He believes that job satisfaction comprises a series of facets, including job content, job compensation, working conditions, and working interpersonal relationships.

In his book Vroom (1964) developed a theory of expectations, which included a discussion of job satisfaction. He defined job satisfaction as an individual's evaluation of the degree of consistency between job results and expectations. Individual expectations include job remuneration, opportunities for advancement, and job security.

Al Qalhati et al (2020); Smith et al (1969) defined job satisfaction as an individual's degree of satisfaction with a job, including feelings and attitudes about work tasks, work environment, work rewards, and work relationships

Weiss et al (1967) defined job satisfaction as an individual’s comprehensive evaluation of satisfaction with all aspects of work. They believe that the individual’s evaluation of job satisfaction involves various aspects of work, including work tasks, work compensation, work environment, promotion opportunities, job security, and work interpersonal relationships.

Their measurement tool, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, contained 20 items in different dimensions, and individuals were required to assess the impact of each aspect on their job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is the primary antecedent in the majority of existing research on turnover intention (Javed et al., 2020; Al Qalhati et al., 2020; Hossain et al., 2018; Steers and Mowday 1981; Tan and Akhtar 1995; Currivan 1999; Tsai and Huang 2008). The majority of the variance in turnover intention appears to be explained by job satisfaction, particularly for voluntary turnover (Carsten and Spector 1987; Lucas and Ingram 1990; Judge 1993; Trevor 2001). Other research (Price and Mueller, 1986; Currivan 1999; Gaertner 2000) attempt to explain turnover intention by integrating organizational commitment with individual factors.

Through a multi-stage linear regression investigation, Kuo et al (2013) discovered that job satisfaction has a strong mediating influence between job stress and turnover intention. Furthermore, they discovered that higher levels of job satisfaction significantly lowered the levels of job stress and turnover intention experienced by long-term care nurses.

### **Employability**

Governments and academics from all over the world have recently placed a high value on the research of employability, including the strengthening of employee capacities and the development of students' job training (Peng et al., 2019).

The history of the concept of employability has been examined by (Gazier, 1998; Forrier and Sels, 2003; Mcquaid and Lindsay, 2005). The term "employability" was first used in the early twentieth century, according to (Gazier, 1998). It was predicated on the distinction between "employable" people (those who are capable, willing, and/or need to work) and "unemployable" people (unable to work and who needed help). According to Vos et al (2011), employability is the capacity of a person to acquire information, skills, and other qualities in order to satisfy the expectations of employers and to maximize their professional potential. Employability is described as "the ability to keep the job one has or to get the job one desires" (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Employability is commonly understood as an individual's chances of employment in internal and/or external labor market (Hossain et al., 2018; Verbruggen & Cuyper, 2015; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007).

Employability suggests a win-win situation: employable workers have a diverse set of skills, knowledge, and talents, as well as the ability to adapt and develop. Organizations benefit from their profiles because they provide a competitive advantage. Individuals, on the other hand, are not bound by the organization and can change occupations whenever they want or need to. (Cuyper & Witte, 2011; Heijde & Heijden, 2006). According to (Berntson and Marklund, 2007; Cuyper et al., 2011; Fugate et al., 2004), employability refers to a person's capacity to land a desired employment. Employees with high employability are highly competent in the labor market since their knowledge, abilities, and experience may be applied to a variety of occupations or organizations (Cuyper et al., 2012).

According to research, employability is positively related to turnover intention within organizations (Chan & Dar, 2014), especially when there is a perceived career possibility (Lu et al., 2016).

According to the evidence (Chan & Dar, 2014), employability is positively related to turnover intention inside organizations, especially when there is a perceived career potential (Lu et al., 2016). Employability is also linked to increased turnover intentions in various work contexts, according to the literature (Hossain et al., 2023; Chan & Dar, 2014).

Cuyper, et al (2010) applied medical staff as samples to analyze and verify that perceived employability does not present a risk of turnover intention, unless job control is low.

According to recent research, nurses' perceptions of their competencies and employability are negatively related to their turnover intention (Camerino et al., 2007). That is, nurses' turnover intention (i.e., their desire/intent to leave the organization willingly) may be influenced by nursing competency levels, and their eventual departure from nursing may diminish the number of nursing personnel. In other words, nursing competences are important not only for increasing nursing quality, but also for reducing nurses' desire to turnover. Turnover intention were unrelated to nurses' perceptions of demanded competence and were adversely connected to perceptions of actual competence (Takase, et al., 2014)

Ferrier and Sels (2003) believe that people who have the ability to work can obtain their satisfactory work. This may be due to the fact that employability is very valuable in the labor market, thus enabling people to choose and negotiate terms at work. On the other hand, the market value of employable people depends on their high human capital; knowledge, skills and the experience needed to respond to the needs of the company and perform their jobs effectively contributes to their job satisfaction.

According to Gowan (2012); Gamboa et al (2009), job satisfaction is positively connected with employability.

### Conceptual Framework

Employability(EA) measured by emotional intelligence &self-management(EAEISM), academic performance &study skills(EAAPSS), career development learning(EACDL), problem solving skills(EAPSS), work & life experience(EAWLX), use the questionnaire (Pool et al., 2014).

Job satisfaction (JS) measured by external job satisfaction (EXJS) and internal job satisfaction (INJS), use the MSQ (Manual for the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire).

Turnover intention uses the turnover intentions scale (Dwivedi, 2015).

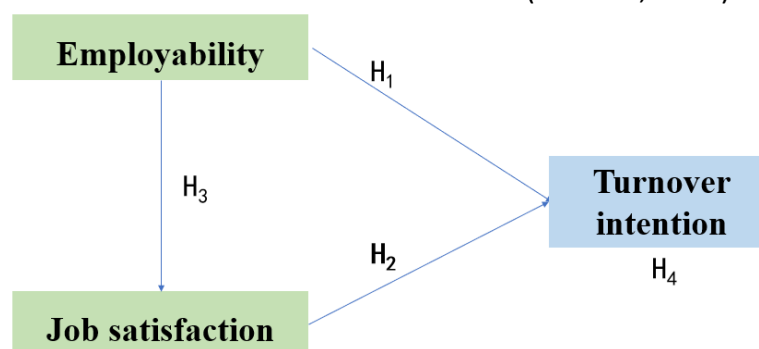


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

### Hypotheses

H1: Employability has a significant impact on turnover intention.

H2: Job satisfaction has a significant impact on turnover intention.

H3: Employability has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

H4: Employability has a significant impact on turnover intention through job satisfaction as an intermediary.

### Methodology

This study uses partial least squares to construct a structural equation model of the factors affecting turnover of vocational graduates, and explores the influence of employability, job satisfaction on turnover intention.

The questionnaire was be distributed for 4 weeks from July 2020, using the questionnaire star online questionnaire survey platform to issue questionnaires through the Internet. The final sample included 400 vocational graduates who graduated one year (graduating in 2019). SPSS 26.0 software was used for descriptive statistical analysis on the background information and data variables of the respondents.

In the study, the 400 respondents were all high vocational graduates who graduated in 2019, that is, they all graduated and worked for one year. As shown in Table 1, 316 respondents are female high vocational graduates, accounting for 79%, and the remaining 84 are male high vocational graduates, accounting for 21%.

Table 1

#### *Gender of High Vocational Graduates*

Demographic factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	84	21.0
	Female	316	79.0
	Total	400	100.0

The surveyed 400 high vocational graduates are currently employed, as shown in Table 2 and 3, 251 respondents are employed in the enterprise; accounting for 62.7%; 46 respondents are employed in the business unit, accounting for 11.5%; 18 respondents are employed in the government department, accounting for 4.5%; 85 respondents are employed in the other types of employment units, accounting for 21.3%.

Table 2

#### *Employment Status of High Vocational Graduates*

Demographic factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employment Status	Employed	400	100.0
	Total	400	100.0

Table 3

#### *Nature of Work Unit of High Vocational Graduates*

Demographic factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Nature of Work Unit	Business Unit	46	11.5
	Government Department	18	4.5
	Enterprise	251	62.7
	Other	85	21.3
	Total	400	100.0

### Result and Findings

The data analysis of this research mainly uses Smart PLS 3.0 software to analyze the measurement model and structural model to evaluate the interpretation of the measurement model and the fit of the structural model. The specific analysis is as follows.

**Measurement Model Analysis**

Table 4 shows the Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE values of each indicator in the model measurement. Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7, Composite Reliability > 0.7, AVE > 0.5 in the various indicators of the measurement model facets, indicating that the measurement facets have good internal reliability and validity.

Table 4

*Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*

	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</b>
<b>EA</b>	0.919	0.939	0.756
<b>EAAPSS</b>	0.787	0.875	0.701
<b>EACDL</b>	0.855	0.912	0.775
<b>EAEISM</b>	0.886	0.917	0.688
<b>EAPSS</b>	0.816	0.891	0.731
<b>EAWLE</b>	0.774	0.898	0.816
<b>EXJS</b>	0.860	0.896	0.590
<b>INJS</b>	0.881	0.910	0.627
<b>JS</b>	0.901	0.953	0.910
<b>TI</b>	0.762	0.844	0.579

Table 5 shows the factor loadings value of each indicator in the model measurement. It can be seen from the table that factor loading > 0.7, indicating that each project index has good reliability.

In the PLS model, the R2 (R-Square) is used to evaluate the interpretation effect of the model. If the R2 of all endogenous latent variables in the model is greater than 0, it means that the model has a certain explanatory ability and is considered acceptable. The R-Square value is shown in Table 6. It can be seen from the table that most of the indicators R2 > 0.2 of each endogenous latent variable indicates that it has good explanatory power.

Table 5

*Factor Loadings*

	<b>TI</b>		<b>EA</b>
<b>TI1</b>	0.692	<b>EAAPSS</b>	0.869
<b>TI2</b>	0.657	<b>EACDL</b>	0.879
<b>TI4</b>	0.856	<b>EAEISM</b>	0.870
<b>TI5</b>	0.820	<b>EAPSS</b>	0.900
		<b>EAWLE</b>	0.826
		<b>JS</b>	
	<b>EXJS</b>	0.954	
	<b>INJS</b>	0.954	

Table 6

*R2 (R-Square)*

	<b>R Square</b>
<b>JS</b>	0.559
<b>TI</b>	0.264

The calculated value of Cross loadings is shown in Table 7. It can be seen that Factor loading > Cross loadings of each variable index indicates that there is obvious discrimination validity between each measurement index.

Table 7  
Cross Loadings

	EA	JS	TI
EAAPSS	0.869	0.633	-0.030
EACDL	0.879	0.660	-0.186
EAEISM	0.870	0.736	-0.180
EAPSS	0.900	0.612	-0.095
EAWLE	0.826	0.604	-0.084
EXJS	0.688	0.954	-0.321
INJS	0.739	0.954	-0.257
TI1	0.041	-0.107	0.692
TI2	-0.112	-0.183	0.657
TI4	-0.138	-0.295	0.856
TI5	-0.148	-0.280	0.820

At the same time, according to the recommendations of Fornell and Lacker, the  $\sqrt{AVE}$  value is shown in Table 8. From the table, it can be seen that  $\sqrt{AVE}$  > Pearson correlation of each aspect, indicating that each index has obvious discrimination validity.

Table 8  
 $\sqrt{AVE}$  value calculated according to Fornell and Lacker recommendations

	EA	JS	TI
EA	0.869		
JS	0.748	0.954	
TI	-0.134	-0.303	0.761

### Structural Model Analysis

Path Coefficients are shown in Table 9. Analyzing the p-value of Path Coefficients, we can see that employability has a significant impact on job satisfaction, hypothesis H3 holds; employability has a significant impact on turnover intention, hypothesis H1 holds; job satisfaction has a significant impact on turnover intention, hypothesis H2 holds.

Table 9  
Path Coefficients

	Beta coefficient	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
EA -> JS	0.749	0.027	27.822	0.000
EA -> TI	0.209	0.082	2.557	0.011
JS -> TI	-0.467	0.071	6.453	0.000

The intermediary effect in the structural model is shown in the Specific Indirect Effects in Table 10. Combined with the P value, employability has a significant impact on turnover intention through job satisfaction as an intermediary. Hypothesis H4 holds.

Table 10

*Specific Indirect Effects*

	Beta Coefficient	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
EA -> JS -> TI	-0.350	5.976	0.000

**Conclusion**

This article selects 400 higher vocational graduates in Shandong Province as the research object. Based on PLS, a structural model of the factors affecting the turnover of vocational graduates is constructed. Through the statistical analysis of PLS, it is found that the measurement model has good reliability and validity. The structural model has a good fit. Through the verification of the model, it is concluded that: employability has a significant influence on turnover intention, hypothesis H1 is supported; job satisfaction has a significant influence on turnover intention, hypothesis H2 holds; employability has a significant effect on job satisfaction, hypothesis H3 holds; employability has a significant impact on turnover intention through job satisfaction as an intermediary, and hypothesis H4 holds.

The hypothesis H1 was validated by means of a questionnaire survey and an analysis of the data that was gathered. Graduates of higher vocational graduates show a significant intention to turnover frequently, and graduates' employability has a significant influence on turnover intention. Employability is a measurement that takes into account a graduate's employability in five different areas. These areas are emotional intelligence and self-management, academic performance and study skills, career development learning, problem solving skills, and work and life experience. Employability has been proven to have a positive link with the intention to leave an organization, as stated by (Berntson et al., 2010; Chan and Dar, 2014; and Cuyper et al., 2011). These findings were derived from research conducted by Berntson et al. In particular, when there is the sense of a potential future career route (Lu et al., 2016). There is a negative correlation between internal employability and turnover intention, which may be explained by the fact that external employability has a positive impact on turnover intention while internal employability has a negative impact on turnover intention. Our finding that employability has a considerable influence on the turnover intention of higher vocational graduates was the impetus for the development of the field of empirical research application in theoretical research on the relationship between employability and turnover intention. This line of inquiry is concerned with the study of the relationship between employability and turnover intention. This discovery was achieved by combining theoretical inquiry with practical investigation and testing.

The hypothesis H4 has received support. Employability has a major influence on intention to leave a work, and job satisfaction acts as a mediator in this relationship. Employability has a positive correlation with feelings of contentment in one's job. Mary (2012); Pablo et al (2009) both cite this study. Employability has a positive influence on job satisfaction, according to Michael et al (2019), who used structural equation modelling to carry out a verification analysis on a sample of 1,307 workers from mainland China and Taiwan. The researchers came to this conclusion after finding that employability is related to both of these factors. However, perceived employability was not substantially related to job satisfaction in their study. This study is an extension of the previous research on the influence of employability on job satisfaction within the context of China. According to the findings of the study that investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to leave an employer, job satisfaction also played the role of a mediating variable. Through the use of a multi-stage linear regression investigation, Kuo et al (2013) came to the conclusion that job satisfaction has a substantial mediation influence between job stress and desire to leave the organization.



Khawaja et al (2015) used employees of Saudi Arabian fast-food chains as the research object, and they discovered that there is an inverse association between employee contentment with their jobs and their intention to leave their current positions. In the meantime, job satisfaction acts as a mediator between productive training programmers, the support of coworkers for training, and inclinations to leave an employer. A number of researchers, including Akhtar et al (2022); Mohammad et al (2019); Ahn and Wang (2019), came to the conclusion that job satisfaction, in its role as a mediating factor, has an effect on the turnover intention. In this particular investigation, which included both a theoretical analysis and an empirical test, we came to the conclusion that employability influences turnover intention via job satisfaction as a mediating variable. The theoretical research on the link between turnover intentions requires further empirical exploration. This study is an extension of previous research on the association between job satisfaction as a mediating variable and the mediating influence on the relationship between employability and turnover intention in the Chinese setting. This study was carried out in China.

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