



Antecedents of Employees Retention in Labor Market in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Employee retention is a crucial factor that drives the attention of organizations. The objective of this study is to explore the factors that affect employee retention in the labor market in Saudi Arabia. It focuses specifically on person-organization fit, work-life balance, and job satisfaction as antecedents that affect employee retention. The study used an online survey to collect responses to examine the antecedents.

The questionnaire was statically analyzed using SPSS and Amos. The total number of respondents that participated in the study is 250 from both genders and variations in experience and age. The key findings of the study show that person-organization fit and Work-life balance have emerged as major antecedents which impact job satisfaction and retention. It discusses the effect of job satisfaction as a mediator between Person-Organization fit and retention. In addition, it discusses the effect of job satisfaction as a mediator between work-life balance and retention.

Keywords: Retention, Person-Organization Fit, Job Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance.

Introduction

Retention is widely discussed in human resources and organizational management. It refers to the ability of organizations to keep and retain their employees within the workforce. Employee retention efforts ensure that employees remain committed, to the organization, which eventually results in reducing turnover rates. Employee retention requires providing the employees with a healthy environment that enhances job satisfaction and opens the doors for growth and development opportunities. It is also crucial to recognize and reward contributions and address the needs of employees, to ensure continued loyalty to the organization.

Maintaining talented and committed employees is a crucial strategic goal for organizations in a competitive labor market nowadays. Employee retention not only preserves knowledge but rather enhances employees' productivity and competitiveness.

This research aims to identify and analyze the key antecedents that drive employees' decisions to remain in their organizations. It will study some antecedents, including person-organization fit, work-life balance, and job satisfaction, to offer a comprehensive understanding of what keeps employees committed. Through surveys and data analysis, we seek to inform strategies that enhance employee retention in a constantly changing labor market. The research model below shows the relationships that will be studied in this research. It will explore the direct effect of person-organization fit and work-life balance on job satisfaction, job satisfaction and retention, and work-life balance and retention. In addition, it will explore the mediating effect of job satisfaction between person-organization fit and retention. The final relationship is the mediating effect of job satisfaction between work-life balance and retention.

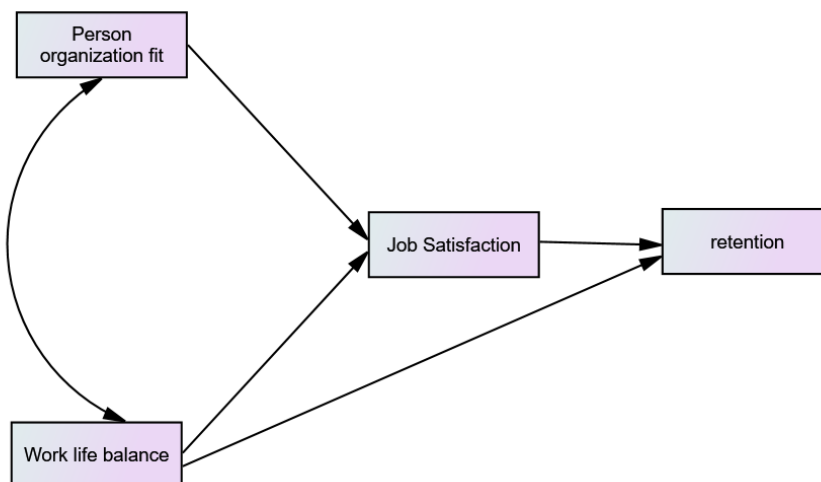
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Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

The Relationship between Person-organization Fit and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is commonly discussed in various research. According to Örucü, Staub, Jenab, Babayiğit, and Deniz (2017), job satisfaction is a pleasing and positive emotional feeling resulting from the compatibility of an individual's working life and working environment, as well as the individual's favorable attitude toward his job. As for Person-organization fit, researchers define it based on



the relationship between an organization and individual basic characteristics. These characteristics of the organization are culture, climate, values, goals, and norms. Characteristics that are handled on the individual's side are values, goals, personality, and attitude (Mumcu, 2021). Person-organization fit is a pivotal factor in understanding the dynamics of job satisfaction. The essence of job satisfaction is aligning personal ideals with organizational values. Employees who find alignment between their fundamental beliefs and those of the organization report a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment in their jobs. Cultural fit is considered a strong predictor of job satisfaction; Employees who align with the organizational culture feel more integrated, and engaged, generating a positive work environment and a sense of belonging. Additionally, high levels of person-organization fit contribute to reducing employees' stress and improve overall well-being, while enhancing satisfaction and retention. The study confirmed that Person-Organization fit positively predicts job satisfaction, (Chen, Sparrow & Cooper, 2016). Organizations that promote Person-Organization fit are more likely to experience increased employee job satisfaction, which leads to increased productivity and organizational success. Based on these studies, the following hypothesis is established,

H1: Person-organization fit has a positive effect on employees' job satisfaction.

The Relationship between Work-life Balance and Job Satisfaction

The phenomenon of work-life balance has been discussed among scholars in a wide range. Work-life balance can be defined as being built upon equal satisfied parallels of family, time, and work; It is meant to balance the work interfering with family and family can interfere with work (Shipmon-Friedli, 2022). The connection between work-life balance and employee job satisfaction is a central theme in the literature. Tosun and Özkan (2023) published recent research that discussed the impact of work-life balance on employee satisfaction. Maintaining a work-life balance leads to increased commitment, productivity, and collaboration. It contributes to enhancing personal and professional life and reducing stress, while work-life conflict negatively impacts these aspects. The research also discussed a study that has been implemented on Gujrat University lecturers examined the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction, finding direct links between extrinsic and intrinsic factors, such as working conditions, co-workers, advancement, recognition, and organizational policies, with job satisfaction. Another research investigated the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction. Employers can help employees achieve a better work-life balance by setting healthy boundaries between home and work, which increases job satisfaction. Maintaining these boundaries and schedules consistently can also improve job satisfaction. Re-

imagining schedules to allow for remote work can help to transform rigid schedules into modern, flexible ones, according to Westover et al. (2020). Based on these studies, the following hypothesis is established,

H2: Work-life balance has a positive effect on employees' job satisfaction.

The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Retention

Employee retention is a voluntary effort by any organization to create an environment that encourages employees to remain employed by the company (ALDamoe et al., 2012). In this research, it is hypothesized that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and retention; This is per numerous previous studies that have been conducted. A study has been investigating the antecedents of retention and turnover, specifying job satisfaction as one of the affecting factors retention. According to the study, job satisfaction is one of the best predictors of intention to quit among other factors. The study suggests that job satisfaction and commitment are crucial for employee retention. Employees consider leaving their jobs when they are dissatisfied with their jobs or have no strong sense of belonging to the organization, Mor Barak, Mor Barak, Nissly, and Levin (2001). Another study that conducted by Mrayyan (2005), in which the researcher discussed nurse job satisfaction and retention by comparing public to private hospitals in Jordan. The researcher aimed the conduct the study specifically on Jordanian nurses since many researchers shed light on external samples. The study provided evidence about the relationship between nurse job satisfaction and retention. It showed that many factors such as marital status, shift work, years of experience, and current area of work affect the employees' job satisfaction and then contribute to higher retention, which is higher in private hospitals than in public hospitals. Moreover, a study conducted by R. Ngotngamwong, (2020) focused on millennial job satisfaction and retention. The study concluded that Millennials desire a supportive organization with open-minded management, coaching, mentorship, challenging work, work-life balance, and competitive remuneration. All these factors affect employee retention. Based on these studies, the following hypothesis is established,

H3: Job satisfaction has a positive effect on employees' retention.

The Relationship between Work-life Balance and Retention.

Numerous studies in the human resources field have been discussing extensively the concepts of work-life balance and retention. In this research, a hypothesis has been established to link the effect of work-life balance on employee retention. Raji, 2018, published a study named the Retention through Work-Life Balance: An Effective Tool of Talent Management. The study aimed to explore work-life balance practices to improve retention rate and overall organizational performance. Work-life balance, according to the study, can enhance employee retention by fostering a healthy work environment, implementing innovative policies, identifying career stages, reducing conflicts, promoting role models, offering flexible hours, investing in technology, and family-friendly policies. In a recent conceptual paper by Al-Harthy and Yusof (2022), the researchers studied the factors of compensation and benefits, job security, work-life balance, employee retention, and localization in the context of Oman. One of the hypotheses that has been confirmed is that there is a positive relationship between work-life balance and retention. Work-life balance is critical in today's business world. It helps employees remain on the job and reduces job-related intentions. Many studies emphasized a direct link between work-life balance and employee retention, with emotional support reducing job-related quitting intentions. As a result, a healthy work-life balance is critical for employee commitment and retention. Based on these studies, the following hypothesis is established,

H4: Work-life balance has a positive effect on employees' retention

Job Satisfaction as a Mediator between Person-organization Fit and Retention

Job satisfaction is important for employee retention, and its relationship with person-organization fit is crucial to be highlighted in research. This study hypothesizes that job satisfaction mediates the

relationship between person-organization fit and retention. McCulloch and Turban, 2007, conducted a study aiming to investigate the use of real person-organization fit as a selection method for forecasting the service length and performance of contact center workers, who have a high turnover rate. It investigated one of the hypotheses that said job satisfaction mediates the relationship between person–organization fit and (a) employee retention and (b) job performance. It found that person-organization fit, which compares managers' work culture descriptions with participants' preferences, contributes significantly to employee retention with the effect of job satisfaction, but is unrelated to performance. According to Chatman, 1989; Cable & Edwards, 2004, job satisfaction is important for employee retention, and its relationship with person-organization fit has attracted the attention of organizational researchers. Job satisfaction influences an employee's decision to stay with a company. Employees who perceive a high level of fit between their values and the organizational culture are more likely to be more productive, homogenous, and satisfied in their jobs. Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005, said that job satisfaction is considered a mediator in the relationship between person-organization fit and retention since it reflects the individual's satisfaction with various aspects of their workplace. Based on these studies, the following hypothesis is established,

H5: Job Satisfaction mediates the relationship between Person-Organization fit and retention.

Job Satisfaction as a Mediator between Work-life Balance and Retention

Work-life balance has emerged as an important determinant of employee satisfaction and retention. Having a harmonious balance between work and social life has been linked to positive outcomes, including increased job satisfaction. In a recent study, Bahar et al., (2022) looked at the effect of work-life balance on Generation Y employee retention in small private enterprises, particularly in developing countries like Bangladesh. Work-life balance has a favorable influence on millennial employee retention, with work satisfaction acting as a mediator. Employers in Bangladesh frequently refuse private employees leave, resulting in increasing job stress. To maintain staff retention, the research underlines the necessity of developing a family-friendly workplace climate. Work-life balance can improve job satisfaction and retention. Employees should be allowed to take vacations and holidays, which can enhance productivity, work satisfaction, and retention, lowering dissatisfaction and turnover. Job satisfaction is an important component of an employee's well-being and influences work-life balance. According to Attar, ÇAĞLIYAN and Abdul-Kareem (2020), employees who have a better work-life balance are more satisfied with their jobs. In turn, job satisfaction consistently contributed to increased employee retention rates (Siddiqui, 2012). Based on these studies, the following hypothesis is established,

H6: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work-life balance and retention.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

An online questionnaire was used to collect the needed responses to find out the study objectives. The study sample size was composed of 250 respondents. The questionnaires consist of two main dimensions. First dimensions dealt with demographic variables which are, age, gender, and experience. The second dimension contained the study variables consisting of 20 items that measure person-organization fit, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and retention.

Measures

The responses for the variables were collected using a five-point Likert scoring system, where 5 is totally agree and 1 is totally disagree. All are based on credible and accurate measurements from previous studies.

Person-organization Fit

Person-organization fit questions included 8 questions derived from the questionnaires of Gomez, (2018).

Work-life Balance

Work-life balance included 5 questions written based on Worley, (2023) questionnaire.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction included 4 questions derived from the questionnaires’ of Asuncion, (2019).

Retention

Retention included 3 questions derived from the questionnaires’ of Slugoski, (2008)

Data Analysis Method

The data was analyzed through AMOS and SPSS. In SPSS, initially, the descriptive statistics for all variables was examined, then Cronbach alpha has been calculated to examine the reliability of person-organization fit, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and retention. While for AMOS, it was used to conduct a path analysis to test the research model.

Results

Descriptive Frequencies

In Table 1, the demographic variables show that 52.8% (N=132) of the respondents were females, while 47.2% were male (N=118). Respondents varied in age from 18 to less than 26 years old (5.2%), 26 to less than 36 years old (28.4%), 36 to less than 46 years old (35.6%), 46 to less than 56 years old (22%), and older than 56 years old (8.8%). Finally, the distribution of experience was as follows: 1 year to less than 5 years was 14.8%, 5 years to less than 10 years was 19.2%, 10 years to less than 15 years was 24.4%, 15 years to less than 20 years was 13.2%, and more than 20 years was 28.4.

Table 1 – Demographic Variables

Characteristics	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	118	47.2
	Female	132	52.8
Age	18 to < 26	13	5.2
	26 to < 36	71	28.4
	36 to < 46	89	35.6
	46 to < 56	55	22.0
	56 and above	22	8.8
Experience	1 to < 5	37	14.8
	5 to < 10	48	19.2
	10 to < 15	61	24.4
	15 to < 20	33	13.2
	20 and above	71	28.4

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the studied variables. It reveals the scores the mean, standard deviations, and correlations. The mean scores show the following results: job satisfaction has the highest mean score (3.592), person-organization fit (3.457), work-life balance (3.4264), and retention mean score (3.126).

Table 2 - Descriptive Statistic

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Person organization fit	3.457	.641
Job Satisfaction	3.592	.932
Work life balance	3.4264	.828
Retention	3.126	1.028

Table 3 - Correlations

Variable	P-O fit	JS	WLB	R
P-O fit				
JS	.640**			
WLB	.590**			
R		.502**		

As for the correlations in Table 3, it was used to look over the hypotheses regarding correlations between the variables. Based on the

findings, there is a positive correlation between Person organization fit (P-O fit) and job satisfaction (JS) (r=0.640; p<0.01), which is considered the strongest correlation of the study. The other positive correlation is shown between work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction (r=0.590; p<0.01). In addition, work-life balance and retention (R) have a positive correlation with (r=0.502; p<0.01).

Table 4 - Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Person organization fit	.821	8
Job Satisfaction	.900	4
Work life balance	.789	5
Retention	.798	3

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach alpha was used to assess the reliability of the measurement scales. The Cronbach's Alpha for

person-organization fit is (.821). The reliability of the work-life balance is (.789). As for the reliability of job satisfaction, it is (.900). finally, the reliability of the retention is (.798). All variables have a high Cronbach alpha, indicating that they are all reliable and acceptable.

Table 5- Model Result Fit

CMIN/DF	1.749
RMR	.011
GFI	.997
AGFI	.965
CFI	.998
RMSEA	.055

Testing Research Model

Path analysis was used to test the study’s hypotheses. The fit indices from the default model are shown in Table 5 and Figure 1. The model fits the data when CMIN/DF value is 1.749, RMR = .011, GFI = .997, AGFI = .965, CFI = .998, and RMSEA = .055.

Table 6 – Path Analysis

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
JS <--- P-O F	.662	.077	8.647	***	
JS <--- WLB	.396	.059	6.668	***	
R <--- JS	.382	.071	5.398	***	
R <--- WLB	.369	.080	4.623	***	

As shown in Table 6, the results confirmed the positive relationship between person-organization fit and job satisfaction (.662), The positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction is also confirmed (.396). Furthermore, job satisfaction is positively linked to retention (.382). Work-life balance is linked positively to retention (.369).

Discussion

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the antecedents that influence workers’ retention with organizations. The study discusses Person-Organization Fit, Job Satisfaction, and Work-Life Balance as antecedents that affect retention.

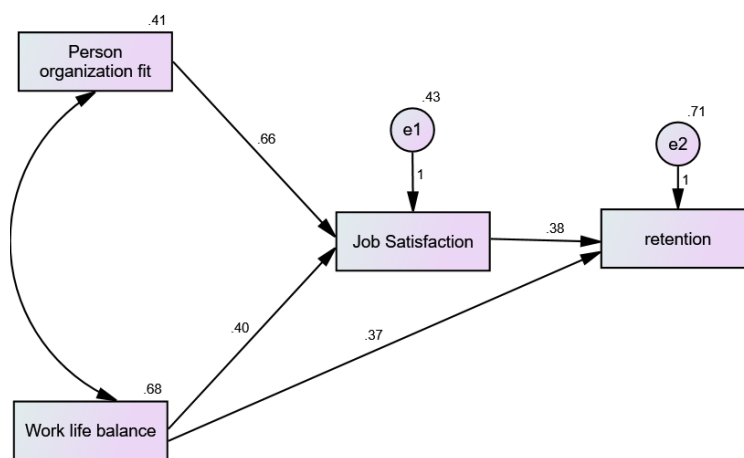


Figure 1

In the first hypothesis (H1), person-organization fit significantly contributed to increase employee job satisfaction. Person-organization fit is positively connected to all dimensions of job satisfaction, including contentment with people, job in general, salary, work, advancement, and supervision. Person-organization fit can be managed through the hiring, communication, and socialization processes. The higher levels of person-organization fit between employees and the organization is related to higher levels of job satisfaction. A higher degree of person-organization fit in the workplace leads to more positive behaviors such as adherence to business values, better productivity, and higher levels of satisfaction. The positive relationship between person-organization fit and job satisfaction is approved by various studies, Farooqui & Nagendra, (2014).

The second hypothesis (H2) stated the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction. Work-life balance refers to a person’s assessment of how well their life responsibilities are balanced with their values, objectives, and ambitions. Work-life balance is highly appreciated by nearly all employees in the world, and it has important consequences for well-being and job productivity. Various research shows that persons who perceive a balance between their job and personal responsibilities are more satisfied and report improved physical and mental health. Work-life balance is linked to job and life satisfaction in employees. This is because people, who have work-life balance, may be more fulfilled since they participate in important role activities. They also may be psychologically healthier because they have a sense of harmony and ideal psychophysiological circumstances. The positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction is approved by various studies, Haar, Russo, Suñe, & Ollier-Malaterre, (2014).

The third hypothesis (H3) stated that job satisfaction is positively linked to retention. Employee motivation and job satisfaction are important predictors of employee retention. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more motivated in their workplace. Employee satisfaction is connected to job satisfaction since satisfied employees are more inclined to stay. Training, a sense of belonging, job stability, demanding work, the opportunity to think creatively, and compensation are all intrinsic and intrinsic motivation aspects that contribute to retaining employees. The positive relation between job satisfaction and retention is approved by various studies, De Sousa Sabbagha, Ledimo & Martins, (2018), Murtiningsih, (2020).

In the fourth hypothesis (H4), it is stated that work-life balance has a positive effect on employee retention. Work-life balance is important for both individuals and employers. It increases job satisfaction and performance. Work-life balance contributes to minimizing conflict, absenteeism, and extra expenses. Organizations should prioritize work-life balance options such as flexible time, job sharing, and breaks to help employees balance their personal and professional lives. It is imperative to reevaluate regulations and improve procedures, which include offering childcare, counseling services, and leave facilities. Exercise, meditation, and soft-skill activities can all aid with emotional balance as well. The work-life balance practices contribute to employee retention. The positive relationship between job satisfaction and retention is approved by various studies, Cegarra-Leiva, Sánchez-Vidal, & Cegarra-Navarro, (2012), Garg, & Yajurvedi, (2016).

The fifth hypothesis (H5) indicated that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between person-organization fit and retention. Person-organization fit impacts workers' inclination to remain in the organization. When employees see alignment with the values of the business, it leads to work satisfaction and, as a result, a higher possibility of remaining with the organization. According to studies, job satisfaction serves as a mediator in the association between person-organization fit and employee desire to retain. It is necessary for employers to screen job applicants based on cultural and values compatibility, as well as supporting a deliberate approach to employee retention. Furthermore, when searching for jobs, workers should carefully evaluate corporate principles. Studies supported this indirect impact of person-organization fit on retention through job satisfaction, Swastasi & Sartika, (2021)

The sixth hypothesis (H6) indicated that job satisfaction works as a mediator between work-life balance and retention. The studies emphasize that work-life balance is a key factor influencing job satisfaction and, consequently, employee retention. Work-life balance has a significant influence on employee retention. Employees who have a healthy work-life balance show increased job satisfaction and general well-being. Satisfied employees are more likely to stay with their organizations and lowering turnover rates. Flexible scheduling and supporting policies, for example, contribute to a more desirable and accommodating work environment. This, in turn, strengthens employee loyalty and dedication, leading to higher retention, Aamir et al., (2016).

Limitations and Future Research

There were certain limitations to the approach used to conduct the research. The sample size is small compared to the general population who are workers in Saudi Arabia, hence, it can't be generalized to all organizations. It is recommended to involve more participants in future studies. It is suggested for future research to narrow the targeted population to investigate deeply and reach more detailed results. It would be better for future studies to discuss additional factors that affect employee retention.

Implications

This study shed light on key aspects impacting employee retention, including person-organization fit, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. The results of organizational practice are significant, and they provide concrete insights into creating a work climate that fosters long-term employee commitment and engagement.

Person-organization fit and work-life balance play a crucial role in job satisfaction and retention. A strong Person-organization fit promotes a sense of belonging and purpose inside the organization. It is linked to better mental health since employees experience a feeling of purpose and fulfillment in their work. Work-life balance is significantly related to overall well-being. Employees' mental health improves when they can balance their job responsibilities with personal commitments. Hence, such qualities will contribute to a favorable atmosphere for work satisfaction and retention. A positive organizational culture is also important in determining job satisfaction. A workplace that supports work-life balance possesses a dedication to employee well-being, promoting loyalty and lowering turnover intentions.

Practices that focus on these two variables will result in a more pleasant workplace defined by engagement, lower turnover intentions, a positive culture, enhanced mental health, and increased productivity, all of which contribute to employee retention. Organizations might strengthen their efforts in employee retention by strategically incorporating the insights obtained from this research. Recognizing the complexities of retention reasons and customizing measures accordingly will result in a more resilient, engaged, and dedicated team.

Conclusion

The current study sought to investigate the factors that influence employee retention within businesses, with an emphasis on person-organization fit, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. The hypotheses were thoroughly investigated, demonstrating substantial connections between these factors. The implications for organizational practice are significant. Person-organization fit and work-life balance have emerged as important factors influencing job satisfaction and retention. Customizing steps based on study findings will result in a more resilient, engaged, and devoted team, enhancing employee retention.

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