

Review of the Relationship Between Job Satisfaction, Affective Commitment, and Turnover Intention: A Conceptual Paper

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Article history Submitted: 09-08-2025 Revised: 01-09-2025 Accepted: 12-09-2025	Abstract The purpose of this paper was to present the reviews of the literature on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention by mediating the affective commitment strategy. As a human resource, the area of turnover intention becomes increasingly more important to firms. Therefore, the present paper seeks to better understand the significance of turnover intention to general institutions and particularly to the Libyan National Oil Corporation.
Keywords: <i>Job satisfaction; Affective commitment; Turnover intention, National Oil Corporation (NOC).</i>	

1. Introduction

Employee turnover intention has become one of the organization's most pressing challenges worldwide. It refers to employees' conscious and deliberate intention to leave their current positions, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Voluntary turnover occurs when employees resign due to dissatisfaction or the availability of better opportunities elsewhere. In contrast, involuntary turnover arises when organizations dismiss employees due to poor performance or organizational restructuring [1]. Both forms of turnover create significant challenges for firms, including the costs of recruitment, training, and the loss of experienced employees with critical organizational knowledge [2]. In resource-intensive sectors such as petroleum, where human capital plays a crucial role in maintaining operational continuity, the issue of turnover intention is particularly severe.

Scholars have consistently emphasized job satisfaction and organizational commitment as two of the most influential factors shaping turnover intention [3]–[6]. Job satisfaction refers to an employee's overall evaluative judgment of their work, including opportunities for career advancement, recognition, fair compensation, and working conditions [7]. High satisfaction levels are associated with reduced turnover, while dissatisfaction often leads to increased turnover intentions [8], [9]. Organizational commitment, particularly affective commitment, represents an employee's emotional attachment and identification with organizational goals and values [10]. Employees with strong affective commitment are likelier to remain with the organization, demonstrating higher motivation and organizational citizenship behaviour. In contrast, those with weaker commitment are more prone to exit [11], [12]. Empirical evidence highlights that job satisfaction directly reduces turnover intentions and indirectly influences them through its positive impact on affective commitment [13], [14].

The Libyan context presents a compelling case for analysing these dynamics. Libya, a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), holds Africa's largest proven oil reserves and remains one of the world's most significant oil producers [15]. The National Oil Corporation (NOC), established in 1970, dominates the petroleum sector and is responsible for domestic and international exploration, production, and marketing activities [16]. The petroleum industry contributes more than 95% of Libya's export earnings and more than half of its GDP, making it the backbone of the national economy [17]. However, the sector also faces considerable political instability, economic fluctuations, and workforce retention challenges. High turnover among skilled employees threatens organizational performance and national financial stability. For this reason, investigating how job satisfaction and affective commitment shape turnover intention within the NOC is theoretically significant and practically urgent. This study, therefore, aims to develop a conceptual model that examines the interplay between job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intention in the Libyan petroleum sector.

2. Literature Review:

Research on job satisfaction (JS), affective commitment (AC), and turnover intention (TI) has consistently shown the interconnectedness of these constructs, yet significant contextual differences remain. For instance, meta-analytical evidence confirms that burnout and job stress remain the strongest predictors of TI, but job satisfaction and commitment also emerge as robust negative antecedents [22]. This broad evidence base underscores the universal importance of these constructs, yet sector-specific findings complicate the picture. Gim et al. [23] demonstrated that competitive climates exacerbate TI in Malaysia's service sector, though AC serves as a critical buffer. Similarly, Soyuk et al. [24] in Türkiye's healthcare industry found that JS and AC jointly reduce TI and improve performance, with organizational support amplifying these effects. Such findings emphasize the interplay between individual attitudes and contextual supports, suggesting that employee retention cannot be managed through job satisfaction alone without considering broader organizational climates.

Other studies have critically highlighted the primacy of AC over other forms of commitment. Opolot [25] concluded that affective commitment most consistently reduces TI compared to normative or continuance commitment, a claim supported by mixed-method evidence from Türkiye, which revealed that negative organizational gossip undermines AC and raises TI, with noticeable public–private sector contrasts [5]. Higher education research has further validated the mediating role of AC, where JS influences TI indirectly through AC [26]. In China's internet industry, advanced modeling demonstrated that JS facets such as pay, culture, and work–life balance directly reduce turnover risk [27], while cross-sector evidence linked job-hopping to elevated TI, though AC partially mediated this effect [28]. These findings reveal that while JS remains a foundational predictor, AC is often the decisive mechanism shaping retention outcomes.

Within the Libyan context, empirical studies underscore the relevance of these global insights but also highlight contextual specificities. Elomami [29] found that JS facets, including pay, supervision, and working conditions, strongly affect TI among employees in Libyan oil companies. At the same time, Shurbagi and Zahari [30] confirmed that JS positively predicts commitment and negatively predicts TI in the petroleum sector. Building on these findings, Abonwara and Ali [31] conceptually framed AC as a central mediator in the JS–TI relationship, situating the model within the strategic importance of Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC). These Libyan-focused studies collectively align with broader international evidence yet reveal that structural factors such as remuneration and supervisory practices play particularly salient roles in resource-dependent economies. The consistency of JS and AC as negative predictors of TI is clear. Still, the mechanisms and strength of these effects vary across industries and cultures, suggesting that retention strategies must be contextually grounded rather than universally applied.

2.1. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has long been a central construct in organizational behavior and human resource management. It is commonly defined as the positive emotional state resulting from an individual's evaluation of their job and work experiences [1]. Locke [2] described job satisfaction as the degree of congruence between what employees expect from their jobs and what they actually receive. Similarly, Spector [3] emphasized that job satisfaction encompasses an employee's cognitive and affective evaluations of various job facets, such as pay, recognition, supervision, and working conditions. Research consistently shows that job satisfaction is negatively associated with turnover intention [4], [5]. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are less likely to consider leaving, whereas dissatisfaction significantly increases the likelihood of withdrawal behaviors [6]. For instance, Arnold and Feldman [7] reported that low satisfaction levels strongly predict employee exits. At the same time, Tett and Meyer [8] demonstrated that job satisfaction is both a direct antecedent of turnover and an indirect influence through its effect on organizational commitment. These findings underscore that job satisfaction is a driver of performance and engagement and a protective factor against voluntary employee turnover.

2.2. Organizational Commitment and Affective Commitment

Organizational commitment refers to the psychological bond between employees and their organizations, influencing their willingness to remain and contribute. Meyer and Allen [9] conceptualized commitment as comprising three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Among these, affective commitment is considered the most relevant, reflecting employees' emotional attachment, identification, and organizational involvement [10]. Employees with high affective commitment tend to internalize organizational goals and values, leading to stronger loyalty and lower turnover intentions [11]. Affective commitment has been shown to mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention [12], [13]. Netemeyer et al. [14] demonstrated that satisfied employees are more likely to develop affective commitment, reducing their intention to leave. Similarly, Douglas [15] found that teachers with higher levels of job satisfaction exhibited more substantial affective commitment, lowering attrition rates. These findings highlight the central role of affective commitment as the psychological mechanism through which job satisfaction translates into retention outcomes.

2.3. Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is the strongest predictor of turnover behavior [16]. Mobley [17] proposed that employees first experience dissatisfaction, which develops into intentions to quit and eventually results in actual departure. Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner [18] confirmed through meta-analysis that turnover intention strongly correlates with actual turnover,

making it a critical variable for theory and practice. Multiple factors influence turnover intention, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, leadership, and work environment [19], [20]. Price and Mueller [21] argued that organizational communication, role clarity, and pay levels are key determinants. Importantly, the petroleum sector in Libya, dominated by the National Oil Corporation (NOC), faces unique challenges due to its strategic role in the economy. High turnover in this context disrupts operations and threatens national economic stability, given that oil revenues account for more than 95% of export earnings [22]. Addressing turnover intention through strategies that enhance job satisfaction and strengthen affective commitment is essential for organizational and national sustainability.

2.4. Conceptual Linkages

The literature suggests that job satisfaction and affective commitment are interdependent constructs that jointly influence turnover intention. High job satisfaction fosters affective commitment, reducing the likelihood of employee exit [12]. Conversely, dissatisfaction erodes commitment and retention, leading to costly turnover [6], [17]. This integrated perspective supports the conceptual framework of the present study, which positions affective commitment as a mediating mechanism between job satisfaction and turnover intention within the Libyan petroleum sector. The hypothesized model linking the relationship between job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intention in the Libyan petroleum sector is depicted in Figure 1.

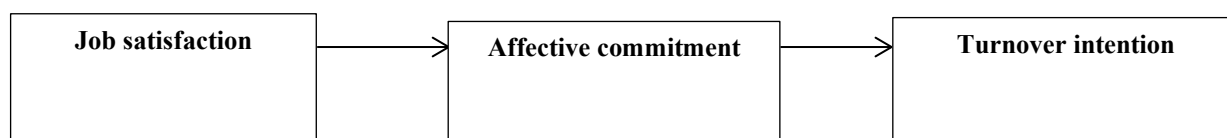


Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework

3. Research Methodology

This paper employs a conceptual research design, which focuses on theory building through synthesizing existing literature rather than collecting primary data. Conceptual research is appropriate when the goal is to integrate theoretical perspectives and propose new frameworks for subsequent empirical validation [1]. Accordingly, this study applies deductive reasoning to extend organizational behaviour and commitment theories to explain the relationships among job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intention. The Libyan petroleum sector was selected as the contextual setting due to its critical role in the national economy and the growing concern over employee retention. A systematic literature review was undertaken to identify, analyse, and synthesize relevant studies. Academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Emerald, and ProQuest were searched using the keywords “job satisfaction,” “affective commitment,” “organizational commitment,” and “turnover intention.” The review covered studies published between 1980 and 2025 to capture both foundational theories [2]–[4] and contemporary evidence [5]–[7]. Only peer-reviewed articles, doctoral theses, and conference proceedings were included, while non-scholarly materials were excluded. The selected studies were thematically coded into three categories: direct relationships, mediating roles, and contextual applications, which provided the basis for developing the proposed conceptual framework. The conceptual model developed in this study positions job satisfaction as an antecedent influencing both affective commitment and turnover intention, with affective commitment acting as a mediating mechanism. This framework is particularly relevant for Libya’s National Oil Corporation (NOC) and its subsidiaries, where turnover intention threatens organizational stability [8], [9]. Although no primary data were collected, ethical academic practice was maintained by properly acknowledging all sources and avoiding plagiarism. The proposed model thus contributes to the literature by consolidating fragmented findings into a coherent framework and offering a basis for future empirical testing in the Libyan petroleum sector.

4. Conclusion:

This paper extensively reviews the literature on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover. This study will also assist hospitality practitioners in reducing turnover costs by suggesting how to mitigate undesirable supervisor behaviors that might unfavorably impact frontline employees’ emotional attachment to the company and career satisfaction. The study highlights that organizations that adopt (practical commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention) are expected to reduce employee turnover than those organizations that do not adopt such strategies. The current paper will likely contribute to the extant body of literature that focuses on the relationship between job satisfaction, practical commitment, and turnover intention. Therefore, the findings of this research study are essential for the service sector because the staff of an organization is essential for its growth. Although the study focused on the petroleum sector, its findings may be generalized to other service and manufacturing sectors.

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