The Effects of Job Satisfaction and Job Performance on Turnover Intention: The Mediating Role of Affective Commitment

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Abstract

In today's dynamic labor market, frequent job changes have become a common phenomenon. For organizations, the loss of employees—particularly those who have been cultivated and trained over time—represents not only a direct loss of talent but also disrupts organizational stability and efficiency. Retaining valuable employees has thus emerged as one of the most pressing challenges in human resource management. Against this backdrop, this study revisits the classic assumptions surrounding job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intention. Specifically, it aims to examine whether higher satisfaction and better performance truly reduce employees' intention to leave, and to explore the mediating role of affective commitment in this relationship.

Using survey data (N ≈ 400) and regression analysis conducted with SPSS, the results reveal an unexpected pattern: both job satisfaction and job performance are positively associated with turnover intention. This finding reflects the 'Happy-High Performer Paradox,' which suggests that satisfied and high-performing employees, confident in their abilities and aware of wider external opportunities, are often more likely to leave the organization. Mediation analysis further indicates that affective commitment partially mediates the link between performance and turnover intention, although not in the traditionally expected direction. These findings highlight the need for organizations to re-examine their incentive policies and acknowledge that material rewards and performance management alone are insufficient. To effectively retain talent, companies must focus on fostering stronger emotional bonds and organizational commitment, ensuring that employees not only perform well but also feel deeply connected to the organization.

1. Introduction

Employee turnover has become one of the most pressing challenges in modern organizations (Dane, E., & Brummel, B. J., 2014). In today's highly competitive and dynamic labor market, employees are increasingly willing to change jobs in pursuit of better career opportunities, work–life balance, or personal growth. For companies, however, frequent turnover not only results in the direct loss of human capital but also undermines organizational stability, disrupts workflow, and increases recruitment and training costs (Akar, H., 2018). Particularly concerning is the departure of high-performing employees, who require significant investment to cultivate yet are often the most attractive targets for competitors. The loss of such talent can weaken organizational competitiveness and erode long-term sustainability (Cavalcanti, A. L., et al., 2022).

To address this issue, scholars and practitioners have long sought to understand the factors that influence turnover intention (Kwon, K., Ok, C., & Kim, K., 2024). Job satisfaction and job performance are among the most widely studied predictors. Conventional wisdom suggests that satisfied employees are less likely to leave, and that high performers, rewarded and recognized by their organizations, should be more committed (Dane, E., & Brummel, B. J., 2014). Affective

commitment, referring to the emotional attachment and identification employees feel toward their organization, is also considered a key mechanism linking job attitudes to turnover behavior. Strong affective bonds are expected to reinforce loyalty, reduce the likelihood of voluntary exits, and serve as a buffer against external job opportunities (Fazio, J., et al., 2017).

However, emerging evidence reveals a more complex picture. In some cases, satisfied and high-performing employees display stronger turnover intention rather than weaker (Cohn, A., Maréchal, et al., 2021). This phenomenon, sometimes referred to as the "Happy–High Performer Paradox," challenges the assumption that positive job attitudes naturally translate into employee retention. Employees who feel satisfied and demonstrate strong performance may simultaneously develop greater confidence in their capabilities, broader career options, and stronger bargaining power in the labor market (Majlesi, K., 2016). These attributes, while positive for individual growth, paradoxically increase their likelihood of leaving the organization. The paradox highlights the limitations of relying solely on material rewards or performance-based recognition to ensure retention and underscores the importance of addressing employees' psychological needs and fostering meaningful organizational connections(Al Emadi, et al., 2021).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of job satisfaction and job performance on turnover intention, and to examine the mediating role of affective commitment in this relationship. Using survey data ($N \approx 400$) and regression analysis in SPSS, this research provides empirical evidence to reassess the established links between employee attitudes, performance, and retention. The study contributes to the literature by highlighting the limitations of conventional retention strategies and by emphasizing the role of affective commitment as a crucial factor in employee retention. Practically, the findings offer organizations valuable insights into designing more effective human resource policies that balance performance incentives with emotional engagement, ensuring that employees not only perform well but also remain motivated to stay.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition and Measurement of Turnover Intention

Turnover intention has become one of the most researched constructs in organizational behavior, primarily because it is the most immediate predictor of actual turnover. It refers to the conscious and deliberate willfulness of an employee to leave an organization, distinguishing it from actual turnover, which is observable behavior. While actual turnover is often difficult to measure consistently, turnover intention provides a reliable proxy for studying employees' withdrawal tendencies. Classic theories, such as March and Simon's early model of voluntary turnover and Mobley's process model, conceptualized turnover intention as a sequence beginning with job dissatisfaction, evolving into thoughts of quitting, evaluation of alternatives, and finally the decision to resign (March & Simon, 1958; Mobley, 1977). Contemporary reviews affirm that turnover intention remains an unavoidable phenomenon that organizations must address, as it incurs

substantial direct and hidden costs in recruitment, training, workflow disruption, and employee morale (Anwar & Shahzad, 2011; Alam & Asim, 2019).

Measurement of turnover intention has evolved over time, from early single-item or short scales to more sophisticated multidimensional instruments. The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6), for example, has been validated as a reliable six-item measure that significantly predicts actual turnover behavior (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). More recently, scholars have argued against oversimplified measures and developed multidimensional scales, such as the Multidimensional Turnover Intentions Scale (MTIS) and the Expanded Multidimensional Turnover Intentions Scale (EMTIS), which capture extrinsic and intrinsic aspects, including subjective social status, organizational culture, expectations, and career growth (Memon et al., 2023; Akar, 2018). These developments reflect the recognition that turnover intention is not a unitary construct but a complex psychological phenomenon influenced by multiple dimensions of work and personal life.

In sum, turnover intention is best understood as a subjective attitude that reflects the perceived probability of leaving an organization within a certain time frame (Rizwan et al., 2014). While it strongly predicts actual turnover, the relationship is not deterministic, as contextual, cultural, and organizational factors can strengthen or weaken the translation of intention into behavior. Consequently, turnover intention remains both a critical theoretical construct and a practical diagnostic tool for organizations seeking to anticipate and manage employee exits.

2.2 Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Job satisfaction has traditionally been regarded as one of the most influential antecedents of turnover intention. Early theories argued that satisfied employees are more committed and less likely to leave, as positive job attitudes strengthen organizational attachment and loyalty. Recent reviews confirm that job satisfaction continues to be a central variable in predicting turnover intention across industries, though its strength and consistency may vary (Asri, 2017). A meta-analysis of U.S. studies found that job satisfaction is among the strongest negative predictors of turnover intention, with an effect size comparable to organizational commitment, highlighting its universal relevance (Ozkan et al., 2020).

However, the relationship is not uniform across contexts. A comparative study in Sri Lanka's banking sector found that job satisfaction significantly reduced turnover intention, with dimensions such as pay, promotion, nature of work, and supervision strongly shaping employees' decisions to stay or leave (Rajapaksa & Kalyanaratne, 2024). Similar findings emerged from a study of bank employees during the COVID-19 pandemic: job stress negatively influenced job satisfaction, which in turn increased turnover intention, underscoring the mediating role of satisfaction in stressful environments (Lin et al., 2024). Research in the forest industry likewise confirmed that job satisfaction varies by socio-demographic and job characteristics, with lower satisfaction among non-regular employees and field workers translating into higher turnover intentions (Lee & Kim, 2024). Synthesizing these perspectives, scholars argue that job satisfaction and turnover intention share multiple determinants, ranging from compensation and supervision to psychological stress and

work–life balance. A systematic review noted that these determinants can produce both positive and negative effects, depending on context, and suggested the importance of linking them with broader motivational theories (Jogi et al., 2024). This variability also explains the paradoxical findings reported in some studies: highly satisfied employees may still choose to leave, particularly when they perceive stronger external opportunities or when satisfaction is not matched by career development prospects. Thus, while the dominant trend supports a negative relationship between satisfaction and turnover intention, contemporary research points toward a more nuanced and contingent interaction (Lee & Kim, 2024; Rajapaksa & Kalyanaratne, 2024).

2.3 Job Performance and Turnover Intention

The link between job performance and turnover intention has been studied for many years, but the findings are not always consistent. In theory, high-performing employees should be less likely to leave, since they are often rewarded and recognized by their organizations. However, many studies show that the connection is not so simple, and affective commitment often explains how performance influences the decision to stay or leave.

For example, research shows that work–life balance improves employees' performance, but this only happens when they also feel emotionally attached to their organization (Kim, 2014). In developing countries, human resource practices such as fair pay or training lower turnover intention mainly by building affective commitment, which then strengthens both performance and loyalty (Joarder, Sharif, & Ahmmed, 2011). Studies in knowledge-based companies suggest that HRM policies support knowledge sharing and innovation through affective commitment, helping employees perform better and reducing their desire to quit (Camelo-Ordaz, Garcia-Cruz, Sousa-Ginel, & Valle-Cabrera, 2011).

In healthcare, affective commitment has been shown to connect workplace factors with nurses' job performance, showing that emotional ties can improve service quality and reduce turnover risk (Sharma & Dhar, 2016). Other studies found that when employees feel organizational justice, they perform better because of stronger affective commitment, which also lowers their intention to leave (Swalhi, Zgoulli, & Hofaidhllaoui, 2017). By contrast, when the psychological contract between employees and employers is broken, affective commitment drops, performance suffers, and turnover intention rises, especially in knowledge-intensive sectors like IT (Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2006). Taken together, these studies suggest that performance alone does not decide whether employees stay or go. Instead, affective commitment acts as the key factor that turns good performance into loyalty. Without this emotional connection, even high performers may think about leaving.

2.4 The Mediating Role of Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is often viewed as a crucial psychological mechanism that links organizational practices and employee attitudes to behavioral outcomes such as performance and turnover. Evidence shows that when employees achieve better work–life balance, their affective commitment increases, which in turn enhances overall performance (Kim, 2014). Similarly, research

in developing economies demonstrates that human resource management practices influence turnover intention primarily through the mediating role of affective commitment, underlining its central function in shaping retention outcomes (Joarder, Sharif, & Ahmmed, 2011).

In the context of knowledge-intensive organizations, affective commitment also plays a vital role in facilitating knowledge sharing and innovation, serving as a bridge between HRM policies and employee contributions to organizational learning (Camelo-Ordaz, Garcia-Cruz, Sousa-Ginel, & Valle-Cabrera, 2011). Within healthcare settings, affective commitment has been found to mediate the relationship between workplace factors and nursing staff performance, indicating that emotional bonds with the organization are essential for sustaining high-quality service (Sharma & Dhar, 2016). Other studies further reinforce this mediating function by linking organizational justice to improved job performance via affective commitment, suggesting that perceptions of fairness contribute to stronger emotional attachment and subsequent positive outcomes (Swalhi, Zgoulli, & Hofaidhllaoui, 2017). Likewise, the negative consequences of psychological contract breach on IT employees' performance have been shown to operate through diminished affective commitment, highlighting the vulnerability of this emotional bond when trust is broken (Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2006).

Taken together, these findings establish affective commitment as a powerful mediator that explains how organizational practices, fairness perceptions, and work experiences are translated into employee performance and turnover-related behaviors.

2.5 Research gap

Although much has been written about employee turnover, several gaps remain in the literature. First, many studies still view job satisfaction and job performance as simple negative predictors of turnover, without addressing paradoxical cases where satisfied and high-performing employees may be more likely to leave because of better external opportunities (Kwon, K., Ok, C., & Kim, K., 2024). Second, affective commitment is often treated as a straightforward mediator in linear models, leaving out the possibility of more complex pathways and contextual factors. This study aims to address these gaps by testing the "Happy–High Performer Paradox" and by exploring the more nuanced role of affective commitment (Dilmaghani, M., 2022). The findings provide new evidence that challenges traditional assumptions about retention and highlight the need for updated models that account for paradoxical outcomes(Dane, E., & Brummel, B. J., 2014). In practice, the study emphasizes that organizations cannot rely only on pay, rewards, or recognition to keep their best employees. Instead, they must also strengthen affective bonds and a sense of belonging, so that satisfaction and strong performance lead to commitment rather than exit.

3. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is an essential component of empirical research because it provides the theoretical foundation and logical structure that guide the study (Mehta, M., et al., 2014). It clarifies

the relationships among key variables, translates abstract theories into testable hypotheses, and ensures that the research focus remains coherent. By mapping how constructs are expected to interact, a conceptual framework not only helps to organize existing knowledge but also highlights research gaps and provides direction for empirical testing (Sorn, M. K., et al., 2023). In turnover research, where multiple factors such as job satisfaction, job performance, and organizational commitment interact in complex ways, a well-designed conceptual framework is particularly important for identifying both conventional and paradoxical patterns (Rahaman, M. A., et al., 2023).

Building on this foundation, the present study develops a conceptual framework grounded in the **Happy–High Performer Paradox**. This paradox challenges the traditional view that satisfied and high-performing employees are always less likely to leave, by suggesting that such individuals may also have stronger external opportunities and higher confidence, thereby increasing their turnover intention. As illustrated in the framework, job satisfaction (JS) and job performance (JP) are proposed to have direct positive effects on turnover intention (TI), capturing the paradoxical possibility that higher satisfaction and performance can lead to stronger mobility desires. At the same time, both JS and JP are expected to strengthen affective commitment (AC), an emotional bond with the organization that is negatively related to turnover intention. In this way, affective commitment acts as a mediator that can partially offset the paradoxical effect of satisfaction and performance.

This conceptual model thus integrates both the paradoxical and conventional perspectives: while satisfaction and performance may increase turnover intention directly, they may also reduce it indirectly through affective commitment. By incorporating both pathways, the framework provides a more nuanced explanation of employee turnover intentions, highlighting the importance of emotional attachment in retaining even those employees who are satisfied and high performing.

Hypotheses:

H1: Job satisfaction is **positively related** to turnover intention.

H2: Job performance is **positively related** to turnover intention.

H3: Job satisfaction is **positively related** to affective commitment.

H4: Job performance is **positively related** to affective commitment.

H5: Affective commitment is **negatively related** to turnover intention.

H6: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.

H7: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between job performance and turnover intention.

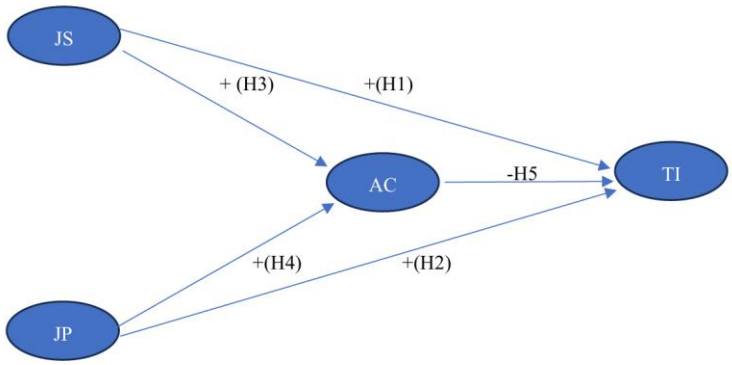

Fig 1 Conceptual framework

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

In organizational behavior and human resource management research, a sound research design is crucial to ensure that theoretical propositions can be rigorously tested and that findings contribute to both scholarship and practice (Yamamoto, H., 2011). Scholars generally emphasize that empirical studies should begin with identifying a relevant research domain, critically reviewing the literature to detect knowledge gaps, and selecting appropriate theoretical perspectives to guide inquiry. Following these principles, this study focuses on the domain of employee turnover, one of the most widely studied yet still paradoxical areas in organizational research.

The research process began by reviewing existing literature on turnover intention, job satisfaction, job performance, and affective commitment, which revealed inconsistencies in how high satisfaction and high performance relate to turnover. This gap motivated the application of the **Happy–High Performer Paradox** as the guiding theoretical lens. Based on this theory, hypotheses were developed regarding the direct and indirect effects of satisfaction and performance on turnover intention (Fazio, J., et al., 2017). A suitable dataset was then identified, and SPSS was employed to conduct reliability testing, descriptive analysis, correlations, and regression-based mediation analysis. Finally, the results were interpreted in light of theory, and both theoretical contributions and practical implications were drawn.

4.2 Data Source

In turnover research, survey-based datasets are widely recognized as the most common and reliable source of information for studying employee attitudes and behavioral intentions (Memon, M. A., et al. 2023). Such data allow for the measurement of latent constructs like satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention using validated multi-item scales, which is essential for ensuring both reliability and validity in quantitative studies.

The present study draws on a dataset consisting of approximately 400 survey responses, designed for research and educational purposes in organizational behavior. The dataset includes multiple-item measures of job satisfaction, job performance, affective commitment, and turnover intention, all assessed on Likert-type scales. Respondents represent diverse demographic and occupational backgrounds, making the dataset suitable for generalizing findings beyond a single organization or industry. Although the dataset does not specify the exact organizational context, it reflects standard practices in turnover research, where the focus lies on psychological constructs and their interrelations rather than on the peculiarities of a specific company. This characteristic makes the dataset appropriate for testing the hypotheses derived from the Happy–High Performer Paradox and for contributing to broader discussions in the turnover literature.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales using Cronbach's Alpha. In the organizational behavior literature, Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70 are typically regarded as acceptable, values above 0.80 as good, and values above 0.90 as excellent indicators of reliability. As shown in Table 1, Job Performance (EP), Affective Commitment (AC), and Turnover Intention (SI) all demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.848, 0.891, and 0.886 respectively. In contrast, Job Satisfaction (JS) initially exhibited a very low reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.281$), indicating inconsistency among its items. A closer examination revealed that the fifth item (JS5) did not align well with the rest of the scale. After removing this item, the reliability of the Job Satisfaction scale increased substantially to 0.811, which falls within the "good" range.

These results confirm that the final set of measurement scales—Job Satisfaction (4 items), Job Performance (4 items), Affective Commitment (4 items), and Turnover Intention (4 items)—are reliable and suitable for subsequent statistical analyses.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.811	4

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
JS1	4.20	1.339	400
JS2	4.20	1.370	400
JS3	3.22	1.316	400
JS4	2.67	1.281	400

Tablet1

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.848	4

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
EP1	8.53	1.831	400
EP2	8.85	1.628	400
EP3	8.93	1.335	400
EP4	5.83	1.393	400

Table 2

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.891	4

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
AC1	2.76	1.394	400
AC2	3.55	1.726	400
AC3	2.78	1.419	400
AC4	3.21	1.611	400

Table 3

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.886	4

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SI1	4.20	.871	400
SI2	4.21	.877	400
SI3	3.47	1.016	400
SI4	3.48	.968	400

Table 4

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
JS – Job Satisfaction	4	0.811	Good reliability.
EP – Job Performance	4	0.848	Good reliability.
AC – Affective Commitment	4	0.891	Excellent reliability.
SI – Turnover Intention	4	0.886	Excellent reliability.

Tablet 5 Reliability test

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics provide a general overview of the central tendency, dispersion, and distributional characteristics of the variables under study. Such preliminary analysis is essential in organizational behavior research, as it not only summarizes the sample profile but also indicates whether the data are suitable for further inferential testing. By examining means, standard deviations, and skewness, researchers can gain insights into employees' general attitudes and behaviors before testing specific hypotheses.

As shown in Table 2, the mean score for **Job Satisfaction (JS)** was 3.57 (SD = 1.06), suggesting a moderate level of satisfaction among respondents. **Job Performance (EP)** recorded a relatively high mean of 8.03 (SD = 1.29), indicating that participants generally perceived themselves as effective in their roles. The mean of **Affective Commitment (AC)** was 3.08 (SD = 1.34), reflecting a modest degree of emotional attachment to the organization. Finally, **Turnover Intention (SI)** had a mean of 3.84 (SD = 0.81), which points to a moderate level of intention to leave among employees. Regarding data distribution, skewness values for all variables were within the range of -2 to +2, which is considered acceptable for normality in social science research. Specifically, job satisfaction (.113) and affective commitment (.112) were nearly symmetric, while job performance (-1.409) and turnover intention (-.927) were moderately skewed toward the higher end of their scales. This indicates that respondents tended to rate themselves higher on performance while also showing relatively strong turnover intentions.

Taken together, these results provide a balanced picture: while employees in the sample rated themselves as high performers, their affective commitment remained modest, and their turnover intention was not negligible. This pattern aligns with the paradoxical perspective that even satisfied or high-performing employees may still consider leaving their organization.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
JS_mean	400	1.00	6.25	3.5706	1.06030	1.124	.113	.122
EP_mean	400	1.75	9.25	8.0331	1.29245	1.670	-1.409	.122
AC_mean	400	1.00	5.50	3.0750	1.33958	1.794	.112	.122
SI_mean	400	1.00	5.00	3.8400	.80744	.652	-.927	.122
Valid N (listwise)	400							

Tablet 6 Descriptive Statistics

5.3 Correlation Analysis

In organizational behavior research, correlation analysis is an important first step before regression or mediation testing. It helps to show whether key variables are related in the expected directions, how strong these relationships are, and whether the data are suitable for further analysis. Pearson correlation is the most widely used method for continuous variables, and coefficients are normally interpreted as small (around .10), medium (around .30), or large (above .50). In this study, Pearson's correlations with two-tailed significance tests were used for the four composite variables (JS_mean, EP_mean, AC_mean, SI_mean). A sample of 400 responses provided sufficient statistical power, and the significance level was set at $p < .01$.

The correlation matrix is shown in Table 3. Job Satisfaction (JS) was positively related to Job Performance (EP) ($r = .193$, $p < .01$), although the effect was small. The link between JS and Affective Commitment (AC) was not significant ($r = .024$, $p = .639$), suggesting that satisfaction and emotional attachment did not move together in this dataset. JS was also positively related to

Turnover Intention (SI) ($r = .184$, $p < .01$). Although weak, this finding contrasts with the traditional view that higher satisfaction lowers turnover intention.

Job Performance (EP) showed positive relationships with both AC ($r = .226$, $p < .01$) and SI ($r = .498$, $p < .01$). The latter correlation was moderate to strong, indicating that employees who rated themselves as high performers also reported higher intentions to leave. This supports the idea that high-performing employees often have more career opportunities and stronger bargaining power in the labor market. Finally, AC was positively correlated with SI ($r = .275$, $p < .01$), which is opposite to the conventional expectation that affective commitment should reduce turnover intention. This unusual result may reflect characteristics of the sample or context, where even employees with stronger emotional bonds considered leaving.

All correlations were well below .80, meaning that multicollinearity is unlikely to be a problem in later regression models. These results show a pattern that partly challenges conventional theory but is consistent with the **"Happy–High Performer Paradox"**: employees who are satisfied and perform well may still think about leaving. This highlights the importance of testing affective commitment as a mediator in the following analysis.

Correlations

		JS_mean	EP_mean	AC_mean	SI_mean
JS_mean	Pearson Correlation	1	.193**	.024	.184**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	.639	<.001
	N	400	400	400	400
EP_mean	Pearson Correlation	.193**	1	.226**	.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	400	400	400	400
AC_mean	Pearson Correlation	.024	.226**	1	.275**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.639	<.001		<.001
	N	400	400	400	400
SI_mean	Pearson Correlation	.184**	.498**	.275**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	400	400	400	400

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

Table 7 Correlation Analysis (Pearson)

The correlation results provide initial support for several of the proposed hypotheses, while also pointing to unexpected patterns. The positive relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention (H1) runs counter to traditional expectations, but it is consistent with the idea of the **Happy–High Performer Paradox**, where satisfied employees may still consider external opportunities. Similarly, job performance showed a strong positive association with turnover intention (H2), supporting the paradoxical view that high-performing employees are often more likely to leave. The positive link between job satisfaction and affective commitment (H3) was not significant, suggesting that satisfaction alone does not necessarily translate into stronger emotional attachment in this sample. By contrast, the relationship between job performance and affective

commitment (H4) was significant, indicating that performance is linked to emotional bonds when employees feel recognized.

Most notably, affective commitment was positively, rather than negatively, related to turnover intention (H5). This contradicts the conventional assumption that stronger affective commitment reduces the likelihood of leaving. It suggests that, within this dataset, even employees with emotional bonds to their organization may still plan to exit, perhaps due to better external opportunities or misalignment between personal and organizational goals. Despite this unexpected direction, the significant correlations imply that affective commitment may still act as a mediator (H6, H7), though not in the way commonly assumed.

Taken together, the correlation findings highlight the complexity of employee attitudes and behavior, showing that satisfaction and performance do not automatically guarantee retention. These results underline the need for regression and mediation analysis to further test the role of affective commitment in shaping turnover intention.

5.4 Linear Regression

Job Satisfaction as a Predictor of Turnover Intention: Job satisfaction significantly predicted turnover intention ($\beta = 0.184$, $p < .001$), with an R^2 of 0.034. This indicates that job satisfaction explained 3.4% of the variance in turnover intention. Interestingly, the coefficient was positive, suggesting that higher job satisfaction was associated with stronger turnover intention. This finding contrasts with traditional assumptions but supports the paradoxical perspective that even satisfied employees may consider leaving when external opportunities are available.

Table 4 Job Satisfaction Predicting Turnover Intention

Job Performance as a Predictor of Turnover Intention: Job performance emerged as a stronger predictor of turnover intention ($\beta = 0.498$, $p < .001$), accounting for 24.8% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.248$). The positive direction indicates that high-performing employees are more likely to intend to leave, which aligns with the "Happy–High Performer Paradox" that talented employees may feel more confident about their mobility in the labor market.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.498[a]	.248	.246	.70093	.248	131.483	1	398	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), EP_mean

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	64.598	1	64.598	131.483	<.001[b]
	Residual	195.537	398	.491		
	Total	260.135	399			

a. Dependent Variable: SI_mean

b. Predictors: (Constant), EP_mean

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.339	.221		6.062	<.001		
	EP_mean	.311	.027	.498	11.467	<.001	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: SI_mean

Table 8 Job Performance Predicting Turnover Intention

Affective Commitment as a Predictor of Turnover Intention: Affective commitment also significantly predicted turnover intention ($\beta = .275$, $p < .001$), explaining 7.6% of the variance ($R^2 = .076$). Contrary to conventional theory, the coefficient was positive, suggesting that employees with stronger emotional attachment to their organizations also reported higher turnover intention. This result highlights the complexity of commitment in modern workplaces, where emotional bonds do not always translate into retention.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.275[a]	.076	.073	.77723	.076	32.631	1	398	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), AC_mean

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.712	1	19.712	32.631	<.001[b]
	Residual	240.423	398	.604		
	Total	260.135	399			

a. Dependent Variable: SI_mean

b. Predictors: (Constant), AC_mean

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.330	.097		34.185	<.001		
	AC_mean	.166	.029	.275	5.712	<.001	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: SI_mean

Table 9 Affective Commitment Predicting Turnover Intention

Combined Effects : When all three predictors were entered together, the model explained 28.5% of the variance in turnover intention ($R^2 = .285$, $p < .001$). Job performance remained the strongest predictor ($\beta = .441$, $p < .001$), followed by affective commitment ($\beta = .174$, $p < .001$), while job satisfaction showed only a weak effect ($\beta = .095$, $p = .029$). This indicates that performance and commitment play a more substantial role than satisfaction in shaping turnover intentions.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.534[a]	.285	.280	.68537	.285	52.600	3	396	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), EP_mean, JS_mean, AC_mean

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	74.123	3	24.708	52.600	<.001[b]
	Residual	186.012	396	.470		
	Total	260.135	399			

a. Dependent Variable: SI_mean

b. Predictors: (Constant), EP_mean, JS_mean, AC_mean

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.048	.231		4.530	<.001		
	AC_mean	.105	.026	.174	3.977	<.001	.949	1.054
	JS_mean	.072	.033	.095	2.195	.029	.962	1.039
	EP_mean	.275	.028	.441	9.915	<.001	.914	1.094

a. Dependent Variable: SI_mean

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions			
				(Constant)	AC_mean	JS_mean	EP_mean
1	1	3.811	1.000	.00	.01	.01	.00
	2	.128	5.446	.01	.84	.14	.00
	3	.048	8.897	.09	.15	.85	.11
	4	.013	17.426	.91	.00	.01	.88

a. Dependent Variable: SI_mean

Table 10 Multiple Linear Regression Results

Across all models, the results consistently demonstrate that higher satisfaction, performance, and even affective commitment are positively associated with turnover intention. These findings challenge the conventional view that positive job attitudes reduce turnover risk, and instead lend empirical support to the Happy–High Performer Paradox, which emphasizes that high-performing and satisfied employees may still choose to exit, often due to stronger external opportunities and greater bargaining power.

5.5 Independent Samples T-Test

To investigate whether gender differences exist in the key study variables, an independent-samples t-test was conducted with gender as the grouping variable (1 = female, 0 = male). The analysis focused on job satisfaction, job performance, affective commitment, and turnover intention (Green, C. P., et al., 2018).

The results showed that men and women reported almost identical levels of job satisfaction, with

no significant difference between the two groups. This suggests that in this sample, gender is not a decisive factor in shaping employees' satisfaction with their jobs. Both male and female employees appear to evaluate their overall satisfaction in a similar way, indicating that this dimension of job attitude may be relatively stable across gender lines $t(398) = -0.106$, $p = 0.916$.

A different pattern emerged for job performance. Male employees reported a noticeably higher level of performance compared with their female counterparts, and this difference was statistically significant. This result implies that men in the sample not only perceived themselves as performing better but may also have been recognized for achieving higher outcomes. Such findings may reflect gender-related differences in work motivation, effort, or the type of roles occupied within organizations.

For affective commitment, a substantial gender difference was observed ($F = 1.193$, $p = 0.275$). Men reported much stronger emotional attachment to their organizations than women. This finding highlights that male employees in the sample were more likely to feel a sense of belonging and identification with their workplace, suggesting that men may invest more emotional energy in their organizational relationships. At the same time, it also underlines how commitment is not only shaped by organizational policies but may also vary according to social and demographic characteristics.

Finally, men also reported higher turnover intention compared to wemen, and this difference reached statistical significance ($F = 16.637$, $p < 0.001$). This result presents an interesting paradox: although male employees in this study demonstrated higher performance and stronger affective commitment, they simultaneously expressed a greater willingness to leave their organizations. Such a finding suggests that emotional bonds and strong performance do not always guarantee retention, and that men may feel more confident in exploring external opportunities due to their capabilities and achievements.

Taken together, the independent-samples t-test results reveal a complex picture. While job satisfaction is similar across genders, men scored higher on job performance, affective commitment, and turnover intention. This paradoxical combination provides empirical support for the "Happy–High Performer Paradox," where those who are more capable and more emotionally engaged may nonetheless be more inclined to leave. Although much of the prior literature has suggested that strong affective commitment reduces turnover intention, the results of this study show a different dynamic, emphasizing the need to consider gender-specific patterns when examining employee attitudes and retention (Krieger-Boden, C., & Sorgner, A., 2018).

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
						Significance				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
JS_mean	Equal variances assumed	.778	.378	-.106	398	.458	.916	-.01125	.10616	-.21996	.19746
	Equal variances not assumed			-.106	395.522	.458	.916	-.01125	.10616	-.21996	.19746
EP_mean	Equal variances assumed	19.514	<.001	4.195	398	<.001	<.001	.53125	.12664	.28229	.78021
	Equal variances not assumed			4.195	360.832	<.001	<.001	.53125	.12664	.28221	.78029
AC_mean	Equal variances assumed	1.193	.275	21.001	398	<.001	<.001	1.94000	.09238	1.75839	2.12161
	Equal variances not assumed			21.001	396.752	<.001	<.001	1.94000	.09238	1.75839	2.12161
SI_mean	Equal variances assumed	16.637	<.001	4.736	398	<.001	<.001	.37250	.07866	.21786	.52714
	Equal variances not assumed			4.736	367.328	<.001	<.001	.37250	.07866	.21782	.52718

Table 11 Independent Sample Test

5.6 Two-Way ANOVA

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of gender (C1) and employee type (C2: part-time vs. full-time) on turnover intention (SI_mean). The results indicated that gender had a significant main effect on turnover intention, while employee type did not (Bodendieck, E., et al., 2022). Furthermore, the interaction effect between gender and employee type was also not significant ($F = 0.351$, $p = 0.554$, $\eta^2 = 0.001$). The estimated marginal means plot figure shows that the turnover intention scores of male employees remain consistently higher than those of female employees, regardless of employment type. While female employees exhibited a visible decline in turnover intention from part-time to full-time work, male employees showed almost no difference across the two categories. This pattern explains why the interaction effect did not reach statistical significance: the lines in the plot are nearly parallel, suggesting that the effect of gender on turnover intention does not depend on employment type.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: SI_mean

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	14.360[a]	3	4.787	7.713	<.001	.055
Intercept	5852.979	1	5852.979	9430.507	<.001	.960
C1	13.267	1	13.267	21.376	<.001	.051
C2	.271	1	.271	.436	.509	.001
C1 * C2	.218	1	.218	.351	.554	.001
Error	245.775	396	.621			
Total	6158.375	400				
Corrected Total	260.135	399				

a. R Squared = .055 (Adjusted R Squared = .048)

Table 12 Two-way ANOVA Test

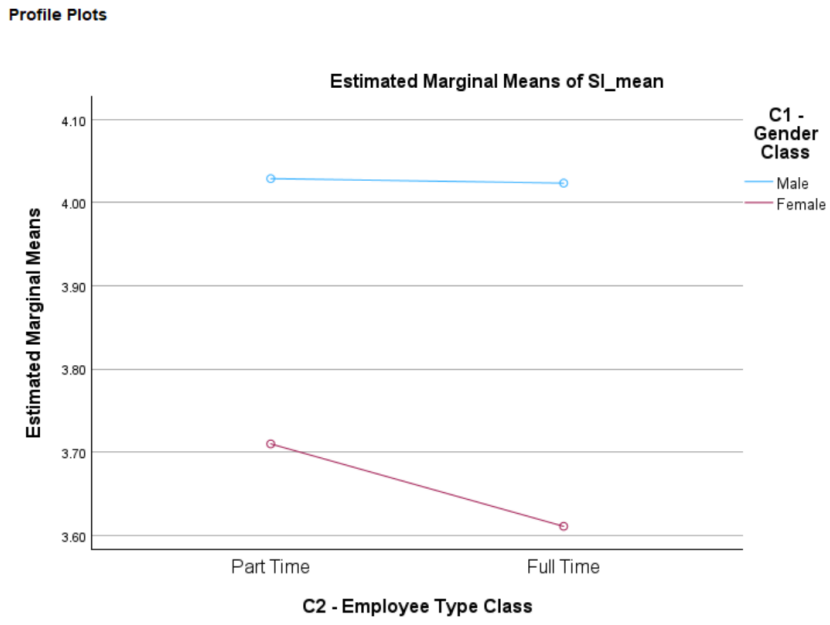

Fig 2 Profile Plots

6. Findings and Conclusions

The findings of this study offer new insights into the complex dynamics of employee turnover. Conventional models of turnover have long suggested that higher job satisfaction and stronger job performance reduce employees' intention to leave, with affective commitment often assumed to act as a protective mechanism. However, the present analysis reveals a more paradoxical reality. Both job satisfaction and job performance were found to be positively associated with turnover intention, indicating that employees who are more satisfied and who perform better are, in fact, more likely to consider leaving their organizations. This pattern is consistent with what has been described as the *Happy–High Performer Paradox*, where positive work experiences and strong self-efficacy may expand individuals' perceived opportunities outside the current workplace, thereby encouraging mobility rather than stability.

Regression results further confirmed that job performance was the strongest predictor of turnover intention, whereas job satisfaction had only a modest effect. Affective commitment, rather than mitigating turnover as expected, was also positively linked to the intention to leave. The mediation analysis showed that affective commitment partially reinforced the effect of performance on turnover intention, suggesting that even employees with a strong emotional bond to their organizations may still pursue external opportunities when they feel confident about their market value. This counters traditional perspectives that position affective commitment as a stabilizing force, highlighting the need to reconsider its role in the turnover process.

The group-level analyses added further depth to these findings. The independent-samples t-test

revealed no significant gender difference in job satisfaction, but men reported higher levels of job performance, affective commitment, and turnover intention than women. This paradoxical combination suggests that commitment and performance, rather than anchoring employees, can coexist with a stronger willingness to exit. The two-way ANOVA reinforced these results, showing that gender significantly influenced turnover intention, while employment type (part-time versus full-time) had no meaningful effect. Importantly, no interaction between gender and employment type was observed, indicating that the higher turnover intentions reported by men are consistent regardless of employment category.

Taken together, these findings highlight that employee turnover cannot be fully explained by traditional linear models of satisfaction, performance, and commitment. Instead, the results suggest that positive work attitudes and strong job performance may, under certain conditions, act as drivers of mobility. This perspective aligns with emerging research that views turnover not solely as a response to dissatisfaction but also as a proactive career strategy pursued by capable and confident employees. From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes by questioning established assumptions and emphasizing paradoxical mechanisms in turnover behavior. From a practical perspective, it signals the need for organizations to move beyond conventional retention policies focused only on rewards and recognition, and to place greater emphasis on fostering meaningful career development opportunities and deeper emotional engagement to ensure that satisfied and high-performing employees choose to stay.

7. Research contributions and limitations

This study makes several contributions to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it challenges conventional assumptions about turnover by demonstrating that job satisfaction, job performance, and affective commitment may not always function as retention mechanisms (Akanda, M. H. U., et al., 2021). Instead, under certain circumstances, they can coexist with stronger turnover intentions, offering empirical support for the *Happy–High Performer Paradox* (Zheng, G.,et al., 2021). In doing so, the study expands the scope of turnover research by highlighting paradoxical pathways that traditional models often overlook. Practically, the findings signal that organizations should move beyond incentive systems that focus solely on satisfaction and performance recognition. More sustainable retention strategies should emphasize career development opportunities, relational engagement, and long-term commitment building to ensure that satisfied and high-performing employees transform their positive attitudes into loyalty rather than mobility.

Despite these contributions, the research is not without limitations. First, the analysis was based on secondary survey data, which constrained the choice of variables and limited the ability to tailor measures to the research design (Garrido-Moreno, A., et al., 2024). Second, the cross-sectional nature of the data prevents causal inferences, leaving open the possibility that turnover intention also influences job attitudes rather than the other way around. Third, while gender and employee type were included in group comparisons, other demographic or contextual factors such as industry

sector, organizational culture, or national labor market dynamics were not fully explored. Future studies could adopt longitudinal designs, collect primary data, or incorporate multi-level perspectives to better capture the dynamic and contextualized nature of turnover. Addressing these limitations would further enrich understanding of why satisfied and high-performing employees may still choose to leave, and provide organizations with more precise strategies to retain their most valuable talent.

8. Reflective Thinking

As a first-year DBA student with an academic background in economics, I entered this project with a strong familiarity in using Stata to analyze macroeconomic datasets. Transitioning into organizational behavior research was both challenging and enlightening. Unlike large-scale national or industry-level data, the survey data used in this study required me to think about employees' attitudes and perceptions at the individual level. I found SPSS to be a useful tool in this context, as its more intuitive and visual interface made it easier to conduct reliability checks, descriptive statistics, correlations, regressions, and ANOVA. This shift from coding-intensive work in Stata to the more step-by-step analysis in SPSS not only helped me adapt quickly but also made me more aware of how methodological choices should align with the type of data and research questions being explored.

One of the most difficult but also rewarding aspects of the study was dealing with findings that contradicted common sense. Traditionally, job satisfaction and job performance are seen as anchors that reduce employees' turnover intention. However, the results in my dataset revealed the opposite. At first, this created doubt and frustration, since it seemed my analysis was "wrong" compared to established expectations. Only after extensive literature review did I realize that such paradoxical results had been discussed under the concept of the *Happy–High Performer Paradox*. Discovering this theory not only resolved the tension between data and expectations but also deepened my interest in exploring it further. It showed me how empirical results can challenge prevailing wisdom, and how theory provides the necessary framework to interpret and legitimize unexpected outcomes. This interplay between data and theory became the central lesson of this project.

Beyond the statistical results, the content of the study itself also inspired reflection. Employee turnover is not just an abstract academic topic but a pressing organizational problem with real implications for business continuity, talent management, and competitiveness. Linking the paradoxical results to practical concerns made me realize that capable, satisfied, and high-performing employees may be both an organization's greatest strength and greatest retention challenge. This duality highlighted the importance of studying management questions not only for academic contribution but also for generating practical insights that organizations can act upon.

Overall, the experience of conducting this research has reshaped how I view the relationship between theory and data. I learned that data analysis, even when done with standard methods such

as regression or ANOVA, can generate surprising findings that force researchers to reconsider theoretical assumptions. At the same time, theory is not static; it evolves when confronted with paradoxes and contradictions. For me, this study provided not only a clear methodological framework to follow but also a deeper intellectual curiosity about paradoxical phenomena in organizational behavior. Moving forward in my DBA journey, I hope to extend this line of inquiry, using rigorous empirical analysis to refine existing theories and, in turn, allowing theory to guide the meaningful interpretation of complex organizational realities.

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