**The Impact of Retention Determinants on Job Satisfaction: A Study of Jordanian Universities**

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**Abstract:** The current research aims to examine the retention determinants and job satisfaction in Jordanian universities. The current research consists of the independent variables signified by retention determinants (namely organizational components, job analysis and design, organizational career opportunities, rewards, and employee relationships) and dependent variable which signified by job satisfaction. In order to investigate the association between independent and dependent variables the quantitative technique was used to gather primary data through a questionnaire, which was administered in the universities in Amman city with academic staff. The sample of this study was accounted 287 staff. The researcher retrieves 198 valid research questionnaires. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants. The result shows that five out of five variables are significant (organizational components, job analysis and design, organizational career opportunities, rewards, and employee relationships) on job. The current research contributes to the academic and professional filed knowledge as being one of the first attempts to explore practically the impact of retention determinants on job satisfaction. Additionally to distinguishing the fundamental roles of human resources and retention policy in enhancing the job satisfaction, this research amalgamates, purifies and expands the experiential work conducted in the field of higher education in Jordan. It elevates many inferences for executives in these universities, such as considering the importance of influences retention policy on academic staff job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Retention determinants, job satisfaction, higher education, Jordan

1. **Introduction**

There are some common areas that affect employee retention. If all of these components are present to meet individual employee expectations, then there is a greater likelihood that voluntary and controllable turnover will be lower, resulting in increased retention (Flynn et al, 2007). Retention is “a voluntary move by an organization to create an environment which engages employees for the long term” (Chaminade, 2007, p. 1). An additional comprehensive and current definition of the concept of retention is “to prevent the loss of competent employees from leaving productivity and profitability” (Chiboiwa et al, 2010, p. 2104). A number of people observe member of staff retention as the effect of the execution of policies and procedures that assist employees to stay with the organization because of the stipulation of a job environment that convenes their needs (Baer et al, 1996). Employee retention, according to Harvard Business Essentials, is the “converse of turnover—turnover being the sum of voluntary and involuntary separations between an employee and his or her company” (cited in Starosta, 2006, p. 60). However, Waldman and Arora (2004), assume that arguing member of staff retention inside the context of employee turnover is inadequate; as an alternative, spotlight should be on the method in which employee retention promotes the preservation of a workforce that is able to meet the organization’s needs. The retention of high caliper staff is a benefit to a university because staff’ knowledge and skills are vital to a university’s capability to be economically competitive (Kyndt, et al., 2009). Staff retention grow to be gradually more vital to universities since periodic employee shortages can lessen the availability of high performing staff (Jones and Skarlicki, 2003); therefore staff are pointed for improved employment opportunities, and universities are looking for to progress the output of their staff (Leeves, 2000). Though, there are challenges in attempting to keep staff (Taplin and Winterton, 2007). Human resources managers be able to find that attracting and retaining talent is a dilemma (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009) for the reason that of surrounded rationality, mainly of socio/cultural norms linked with the state (Metcalfe, 2008). Researchers reveal that organizations employ many techniques to retain their academic and administrative staff, such as having compensation, training and development, competitive work environment, and additional benefits. Faculties retention is the core aim and the foremost concern for most universities. The purpose of the present study is to identify the retention determinants and staff job satisfaction in Jordanian universities. Conclusion of this research are helpful and beneficial for the university decision makers in applying proper strategies to construct successful retention policy in their universities.

1. **Literature Review**

Organizations are more concerned on the subject of retention of their human resources since intent to go away is unsatisfactory for both employees and employers. Lockwood and Ansari (1999) stated that organizations have to tolerate the charge of hiring, and the cost of losing, their manpower; consequently, organizations strive to remain their current employees. In fact, this retention of human resources and their valued skills assists the organization to protect their investment of staff raining, which causes poorer loss of intellectual capital and yields superior retention (Acton and Golden, 2003). Reviewing a wide range of studies and situations faced by organizations and employees, it appears that there are some common areas that affect physician retention. There are some retention determinants which are important to take in considerations by university management during formulate their retention policy.

*2.1 Organizational Components:* organizations that have positive, distinctive cultures and values have fewer turnovers. Organizational culture is “a model of common values and beliefs giving members of an organization sense and providing them with rules for behavior” (Flynn et al, 2007). Organizational culture figures its members’ reactions and defines what an organization be able to or is eager to do. Many organizations employees have seen a decline in job security more the past decade due to downsizings, layoffs, mergers and acquisitions, and organizational restructuring. Employees who work in organizations where job permanence and security is high tend to have superior retention rates. As a wide-ranging concept that comprised belief, ideology, custom, norm, tradition, knowledge, and technology, organizational culture is an vital cause that influences the behavior of an organization and its staff (Park and Kim, 2009).

*2.2 Job Analysis and Design:* is the method of receiving comprehensive information about a career (De Cieri and Kramar, 2008), which might offer information for a diversity of purposes, including determining training needs, development criteria, and suitable pay and efficiency. Job design compacts with making decisions about tasks that will be necessary in a specified job (De Cieri and Kramar, 2008). There are two specific factors at play here. The first concerns the necessitate to meet the organization’s needs in terms of productivity, achievement and quality, whereas the second relates to the needs of individual employees and the requirement to provide them with a work environment that is challenging and rewarding (Armstrong, 2009). The effectiveness of human resources performs requires that the job be clearly understood by both jobholders and the organization. The practice of job analysis provides this understanding (Siddique, 2004), and it has been suggested that organizations actively following this practice as an human resources planning strategy are probable to add value or creating a competitive advantage (Dessler, 2003). The eventual principle of job analysis is to progress organizational performance, helping the organization generate a suitable infrastructure by defining the tasks to be executed as well as the timelines for performing them. Job analysis thus has the possibilities to make a contribution to organizational performance both directly and interactively with other key human resources practices (Siddique, 2004). It has been argued that job analysis and design can improve performance of the employees and job satisfaction (Moyes , 2008).

*2.3 Organizational Career Opportunities:*workers in all types of jobs consistently seek career opportunities and development efforts, which affect employee retention. Some programs, typically offered as benefits by many employers, allow employees to pursue additional educational and training opportunities. Employees who participate in these programs have been found to have higher retention rates than individuals who do not do so. Yet, organizations have to recognize ways to utilize the employees' novel knowledge and capabilities within the university. Otherwise, employees are more likely to take their new capabilities to another employer because they feel their increased "value" is not being recognized (Flynn, 2007). Training is not purely a means of arming staff with the skills they need to execute their tasks and duties: moreover, it is believed to be delegate of an employer’s commitment to their employees. Investment in training measures and the completion of development schemes are becoming increasingly acknowledged as vital elements of human resources management (Oakland and Oakland, 2001), and studies in different sectors have all resulted a positive correlation between investment in training and human resources commitment (Bassi and Buren, 1999). In conclusion, suitable training contributes positively to employee retention for the reason that it builds employees feel recognized for their strengths, and it creates possibilities to develop their qualities (Kyndt, et al., 2009; Visser, 2001).

*2.4 Rewards:*different studies of human resources professionals reveal that one critical factor to retention is to have competitive compensation practices compare with other providers. Benefits must be competitive, which means they must be "close" to what other employers are providing (typically within 10%) and what individuals believe to be reliable with their capabilities, knowledge, skills, and performance (Mathis and Jackson, 2010). De Cieri and Kramar (2008) state, the pay system has an vital role in implementing strategies. The way people are paid influenced the quality of their job, their attitude towards customers, and their eagerness to be stretchy and learn new skills (Milkovich, et al, 1991). De Cieri and Kramar (2008) state that a high level of pay and/or benefit relative to that of competitors can guarantee that a organization recruits and retains high caliper employees. Pay may be one system staff calculate whether the time they use and the effort they place into working are worthwhile (Ryan and Sagas, 2009). A factor affecting services worker motivation and retention extant literature has identified two broad categories of incentives for university staff motivation and retention. These are financial incentives (salary supplements, benefits and allowances) and non-financial incentives (improved working and living conditions, continuing education and professional development, supervision and managements, etc.) (Henderson and Tulloch, 2008). The work environment in which academic staff provide education services can also be an incentive for retention.

* 1. *Employee Relations:*the universal approach to relations with employees can powerfully affect a organization’s possible to win a competitive advantage (De Cieri and Kramar, 2008). Many studies have found that employees are more disposed to stay when they have strong relationships with their job colleagues (Clarke, 2001); that staff who work as a team are more probable to feel an increased commitment to the work department efforts and the organization as a whole; and that employees be inclined to remain in organizations where they have recognized a strong teamwork relationship at the work environment (Clarke, 2001). Retention is based on the relationships that employees have in organizations.
  2. *Job Satisfaction*

Job satisfaction refers to the emotions the personnel feels about his/her work, and how he/she responds to them (Shiu and Yu, 2010). Job satisfaction is a generally studied concept in many professional fields, including the higher education services industry. Robbins (1996) hypothesized that job satisfaction stands for the general attitudes that a worker has toward his/her job, with a high level of job satisfaction representing a positive attitude. Job satisfaction refers to a joyful or positive emotional state regarding work or the work experience (Suzuki et al, 2006). Level of job satisfaction depends on the variation between actual gains and expected gains, and can be divided into two constructs: internal satisfaction and external satisfaction (Shimizu et al, 2005; Castle et al, 2007).

**3. Research Problem**

The research problem evolves about exploring the academic staff retention determinants. This research attempts to respond the following questions:

1. Is the retention determinants factors achieving the academic staff job satisfaction in Jordanian universities?

2. Are the organizational components achieving the academic staff job satisfaction in Jordanian universities?

3. Are the organizational career opportunities achieving the job satisfaction in Jordanian Universities?

4. Are the reward and incentives achieving the job satisfaction in Jordanian Universities?

5. Is the work/life balance achieving the job satisfaction in Jordanian Universities?

6. Are the employee relationships with supervisors and co-workers achieving job satisfaction in Jordanian Universities?

**4. The Rationale of the Research**

The research value spotlight on that determination and learning of elements influencing academic staff retention are extremely vital issue that help the university administration to accurately advance staff job satisfaction which leads to staff retention of academic services in universities in Jordan. This research will make a positive contribution in the direction of retention policy influences job satisfaction in the higher education services in Jordan. The research outcomes can fundamentally assist the university decision making to scheme all the aspects of their hospitals, and to focus on retention policy concept and its variables, which may in turn influence positively the university staff satisfaction, and this ultimately can improve the overall performance of the searched universities.

**5. Research Objectives**

Based on the above section highlighting the research problem and relevant literature of the Jordanian universities, the research objectives are:

1. To reveal the adoption of retention determinants in the Jordanian universities.

2. To determine the factors which constitute retention policy in the Jordanian universities?

3. To investigating the effect of retention determinants on academic staff job satisfaction.

**6. Research Methodology**

This type of research is a cross-sectional study survey in which both private and public sectors operating in Jordan higher education market are included in the current research. The researchers were selected all the academic staff from each sectors to be the research sample. Therefore, all the academic staff (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, and lecturer) in these Universities were called and attracted to participate in the research survey, the number accounted (287). The researchers gathered 210 questionnaires, yielding a response rate of 73 per cent. Finally, 198 (94 per cent) questionnaires were fully and correctly completed. All data collection procedures were designed to ensure the anonymity. The sample of this research typically held purposive sample.

It ought to renowned that every research questionnaire was personally handed and instructions were given to each staff before carrying out the questionnaire.

*6.1 Data Collection*

The research questionnaire was designed based on previous empirical literature. The questionnaire design was pre-tested and redesigned through personal interviews with university academic staff by undertaking the pilot study work (Aaker et al, 2001).

The research questionnaire was used as primary data collection method as shown in (Table1, 2, 3). The components of retention policy, job satisfaction, and organizational commitments items were measured on 5-point Likert- scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). For the retention policy, job satisfaction dimension, the research respondents were asked to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement on the retention items that university used retention policy determinants technique in order to achieve job satisfaction.

Multiple items were used to assess their measurement properties. Consistent with the literature, the scale items selected for the dependent variable were direct measures of job satisfaction with influences received from adoption of retention policy as independent variables. This format has been recommended for human resources management.

Both the independent and dependent variable (s) deployed in the research are explained in Table 1, 2and

3 according to the proposed hypotheses

Table 1. Retention Policy Dimensions: Independent Variables

**University organizational components (**independent variable)

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive significant relationship between organizational components and job satisfaction.

University organizational components in Jordanian universalities was measured on:

University management has a positive and distinctive culture, University management has a positive and distinctive values, University management is keen to provide the academic staff with rules of behavior, University culture shapes its staff responsibilities and defines what a University can or is willing to do, The University consider the job continuity and security due to downsizing and layoffs.

**Career opportunities** (independent variable)

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive significant relationship between career opportunities and job satisfaction.

The measure for this factor consists of: The university working on the development of its staff to achieve better performance. The university considers develop knowledge and skills of staff as an investment. The process of developing the knowledge and skills of staff is an ongoing process in our university. The university is keen on the education of its staff "Why are they doing this" and not just "how to accomplish these acts". The university staff receive training to be able to perform the education service correctly. The university considers career planning of staff as an excellence.

**Rewards** (independent variable)

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive significant relationship between reward and incentives and job satisfaction

Reward and incentives in the in Jordanian universities was measured on: The measurement system of performance and rewards in the university encouraged to work well. The university is keen to measure and reward employee performance that contributes to achieving its vision**.** The university has a competitive compensation practices. The university has a competitive benefits practice.

University staff that provide excellent services, they will get a good reward. The university has special benefits and perks. The university has a differentiation of compensation. The university has a tangible recognize (e.g. employee of the month). The university has intangible recognize (e.g. acknowledgement of effort).

**Job Design and Work** (independent variable)

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive significant relationship between work/life balance and job satisfaction.

work/life balance in the in Jordanian universities was measured on: University management gives me good job responsibilities and autonomy. University management gives me opportunities for promotion. University management interested in my suggestions leading to change the working environment. University management gives flexible work scheduling. The university management is trying hard to make my work enjoyable as possible. The university is keen to provide suitable working environment. University management gives flexible work/life balance (e.g. flexible time off).

**Employee Relationships** (independent variable)

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive significant relationship between Employee Relationships and job satisfaction.

Employee Relationships in Jordanian universities was measured on: University management is keen to creating understanding among employees. University management is keen to building ownership among employees. University internal communications is the key to providing information to all employees. University management is attention to treat with all staff in fair and non-discriminatory. University management is keen to support the staff. Supervisors are keen to support the staff. University Management is keen to enhance the co-workers relations.

Table 2. Job satisfaction Dimension: Dependent Variables

**Job satisfaction (dependent variable)**

Job satisfaction in the Jordanian universities was measured on: I'm satisfied with overall job, I'm satisfied with career opportunities. I'm satisfied with the university policies, I'm satisfied with support from the university, I'm satisfied with opportunities for advancement.

**7. Research Variable Analysis Results and Discussion**

The general hypothesis for this section is “There is a positive significant relationship between retention policy determinants and job satisfaction”.

Table 5 shows the coefficient of the multiple regression model/ job satisfaction, (N=198).

Table 5. Coefficient of the multiple regression model/ job satisfaction

**Unstandardized coefficient**

**Standardized**

**coefficient T Sig**

**Model**

**B Std. error**

**Beta**

University organizational components

Career opportunities

1.440

0.265

2.440

0.365

0.125

0.315

0.135

0.365

0.533 16.51

9.222

0.514 18.51

9.542

0.004

0.012

Rewards 2.153

0.461

0.151

0.044

0.546 14.237

10.390

0.044

Job design and work

Employee relationships

1.784

0.546

1.469

0.591

0.139

0.039

0.151

0.040

0.662 12.862

14.066

0.684 9.705

14.926

0.030

0.00

**Dependent variable: Job satisfaction**

*Y = B0 + B1X1 + B2X2 + B3X3 + B4X4 +B5X5+ E*

*Y = 0.654+0.212X1 + 0.365X2 + 0.433X3 + 0.627X4 +0.485X5 + E*

Where:

*Y= the predicted value on job satisfaction*

*B0= the Y intercept, the value of Y when all Xs are zero X1= University organizational components*

*X2=Career opportunities*

*X3=Rewards*

*X4=Job design and work*

*X5=Employee relationships*

These coefficients as shown in table 5 are referred to as B values, which indicate the individual contribution of each predictor to the model. By replacing the B values into the above equation, the model becomes defined. In this way, the B values inform the relationship among the job satisfaction and the influences of the retention policy determinants. If the value is positive, this indicates a positive relationship between the predictor and the outcome, whereas a negative coefficient represents a negative relationship.

Viewing the B value under the first column, employee relationships has the highest positive relationship with the outcome variable job satisfaction (B=0.591). In the same vein, the other four components (university organization components, career opportunities, rewards, and job design and work) are significantly related to the job satisfaction (P-value=0.265, 0.365, 0.433, 0.546) respectively.

**8. Conclusion and Recommendation**

The results of this research bear a number of significant empirical conclusions for researchers and practitioners in universities.

**8.1 Retention policy determinants Components**

It is found that there is a significant impact of retention policy determinants on the staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The empirical conclusion that could be drawn from this research is a multifaceted one. This is mainly because this research had to investigate both controllable and uncontrollable issues (retention policy determinants on the staff job satisfaction). These main empirical conclusions are as follows.

Staff satisfaction is a necessary issue in higher education organizations to ensure these organizations’ success. Conversely, the staff dissatisfaction leads to turnover phenomena. It is vital to university management and human resources management in particular to acts on behalf of the whole university or with coordination in dealing with retention policy factors namely university organizational components, career opportunities, rewards, job design and work, employee relationships . These are the factors that the university is attempting to win via the human resources strategy application and the services delivered. This research argues that such strategy does not evolve simply by chance, but through a planned effort

by the university management. Such effort would be insufficient and inadequate without considering five retention policy determinants. The link between these factors and the staff job satisfaction was based on findings from the literature, pilot interviews, the qualitative study and results of this research sample survey. The framework suggests that staff job satisfaction as a core construct in this research receives its vital role through the effect of retention policy on staff job satisfaction.

**8.2 Limitations and avenues for future research**

While this study has provided valuable insight, there are some limitations, which may limit generalisability: One major difficulty with this research is that no studies have been previously performed regarding the implementation of retention policy determinants factors influencing staff job satisfaction among higher education market. Although this will add to the originality and value of this study, the research will not have the added benefit of learning from others’ mistakes.

In summary, this research makes a positive contribution in the direction of retention policy determinates influences on staff job satisfaction in the in Jordanian universities. However, this research sought to overcome the limitations it encountered with the most methodological sound techniques and it should be followed by other efforts in the same direction. This research and similar studies will encourage other researchers to engage in more studies regarding the retention policy factors that influence staff job satisfaction in the hope that such efforts will improve the relationship between the university, its managers and its students with regard to greater mutual and common advantages and benefits.

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