

# The Influence of Organizational Commitment towards Lecturer's Turnover Intentions in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Malaysia

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v15-i7/25964> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v15-i7/25964

**Published Date:** 21 July 2025

## Abstract

This study examines the influence of organizational commitment on the lecturer's turnover intentions in PHEIs in Malaysia. The elements of organizational commitment include affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward turnover intentions. This study is fully quantitative and focuses on PHEIs with college status in Malaysia, consisting of 335 colleges. The total population of lecturers in these colleges is 7,771. Research instruments adopted the Turnover Intentions Scale (TIS-6) and the Three Component Model (TCM). The online questionnaires were distributed for data collection and 369 data were collected. The data was analyzed using Associational Inferential Analysis. The collected data is input into statistical software the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. The finding shows that there are adverse relationship between affective and normative commitment with turnover intentions. Whereas, continuance commitment shows no relationship with turnover intentions. In conclusion, affective and normative commitments have a direct influence on turnover intentions among the lecturers at PHEIs in Malaysia. This study is significant as it concentrates on the private higher education sector in Malaysia. The findings could assist PHEIs in formulating strategic plans to decrease turnover rates and maintain a skillful workforce in the institutions.

**Keywords:** Turnover Intentions, Organizational Commitment, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment, Private Higher Education Institutions

## Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in nation-building and developing human resources (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020). The nation-building includes shaping individuals, communities, and societies. Education empowers the individual by equipping them with knowledge, skills,

and critical thinking skills for their personal development and producing the skilled workforce that is needed in the 21st Century (Miterianifa et al., 2021). Besides that, economic development can be derived through education (Valero & Van Reenen, 2019). Hence, economic development can be derived through education by enhancing skills and fostering innovation in which new products and processes are being developed. As a result, this innovation leads to the development of entrepreneurship in society. Other than that, education is important to reduce poverty and equality in society (Marsinta et al., 2020). Access to quality education has the potential to reduce poverty and inequality by providing individuals with opportunities for socioeconomic advancement. Hence, education serves as a cornerstone of progress and development, empowering individuals, communities, and nations to build a better future and become valuable capital that each individual should earn which can enhance their social and economic status.

There are a few stages of education that normally start with early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Higher educational institutions are categorized under tertiary education. Tertiary education in Malaysia is divided into two sectors which are the private and public sectors. Private higher education institutions are owned by private companies or organizations whereas public higher education institutions are owned by the government. Higher education institutions are responsible for producing high-quality and skilled human resources. This involves developing the skills, knowledge, and leadership necessary to meet the ever-evolving needs of the job market through various programmes offered from the certificate level up to the doctoral level. Hence, investment in education is essential which will contribute to the development of human capital, where this human capital is crucial for social and economic development. (Halid et al., 2020). The development of human capital is through various programmes offered by higher education institutions. The programmes offered covered various fields of study to meet the market need and demand. Programmes offered by higher education institutions are essential worldwide to provide educational opportunities. The core function of any higher education institution is an academic operation that mainly focuses on the teaching and delivery process in which lecturers play major roles. Academic operation becomes the backbone of educational institutions. The lecturers who are the main pillars of an institution play a very important role in ensuring the success of the institution. In addition, higher education institutions are aware that academics play a role in changing an individual which is the student from a person who has zero knowledge to an intelligent and capable individual.

Organizational commitment becomes the factor that contributes to the lecturers leaving the institution. Organizational commitment refers to the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that the employee has with the organization. Organizational commitment manifests in three mindsets: affective, normative, and continuance. These mindsets can predict various employee outcomes including turnover, citizenship behaviours, job performance, absenteeism, and tardiness (Khalip, 2016). Affective commitment refers to an emotional bond with the organization, continuance commitment is the perceived costs or losses one might face upon leaving the organization and normative commitment is a sense of duty or obligation to stay with the organization (Meyer et al., 1993). The higher the affective, continuance, and normative commitment, the lower the turnover intentions (Ratnasahara Elisabeth et al., 2021). This shows that lecturers with high emotional bonding or emotional attachment with the institutions will have low turnover intentions. Lecturers with high

continuance commitment find it difficult to leave the company due to the fear of losing their income. Therefore, they choose to stay because they need financial stability. Besides that, lecturers with a feeling of obligation towards the job and institutions will also have low turnover intentions and will survive in the institutions. Overall, the higher the organizational commitment, the lower the turnover intentions which leads to lower turnover (Imran et al., 2017). The study is guided by three research questions:

1. Is there a significant association between the lecturer's affective commitment toward turnover intentions?
2. Is there a significant association between the lecturer's continuance commitment toward turnover intentions?
3. Is there a significant association between the lecturer's normative commitment toward turnover intentions?

### **Methodology**

This research applied a quantitative approach to investigate the influence of organizational commitment on lecturer turnover intentions in Malaysian private higher education institutions. Through surveys conducted via Google Forms, data was efficiently collected from a diverse sample across various institutions and various states. The target population consisted specifically of lecturers from Private Higher Institutions (PHEIs) with college status. According to data from the Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia (2021), there are a total of 335 colleges with an overall lecturer population of 7,771 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020). In this study, focusing on lecturers from Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) with college status is crucial due to their significant representation, despite receiving less attention in previous research. According to the Ministry of Higher Education (2020), these colleges contribute 31.43% of the total lecturer population in Malaysia, ranking second after universities, which contribute 47.73%. The determination of the sample size for the study followed Krejcie and Morgan's formula, which bases sample size ( $n$ ) on the total population ( $N$ ) (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The total population of 7,771 is between 7,000 to 8,000. Based on this, the researcher decided the minimum required sample size is 367 participants. The response rate 369 responses were collected out of the 367 targeted participants.

There are two constructs for this study. The first construct is the dependent variable which is the turnover intentions. The second construct is the independent variable which is motivation (amotivation, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation). All the instruments are adopted hundred percent and no changes have been made. For the first variable which is the turnover intentions, the researcher has adopted an instrument developed by Roodt (Roodt, 2004; Bothma & Roodt, 2013), the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6). TIS-6 consists of six items. The second variable is the organizational commitment used to instrument the Three-Component Model (TCM) Instrument by Allen & Meyer (1990) which is designed to assess organizational commitment across three distinct constructs using a total of 18 items. The items are divided into three different constructs. The first construct is affective commitment with six items. The second construct is continuance commitment with six items and the same goes for construct three which is normative commitment has six items. This model provides a detailed understanding of how individuals perceive and engage with their organizations through different dimensions.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1** shows the reliability analysis for this study. The reliability test shows that the Turnover Intentions Scale (TIS-6) ( $\alpha = 0.71$ ). The Turnover Intentions Scale (TIS-6) assesses the likelihood of the lecturers intending to leave their current institutions. With Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.71, this indicates moderate internal consistency among the items comprising the scale. While Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 or higher is generally acceptable for educational research purposes (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The TIS-6 demonstrates sufficient reliability to measure turnover intentions reliably in this study. Whereas the test indicates that the Three-Component Model (TCM) ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ). The Three-Component Model (TCM) assesses organizational commitment through affective, normative, and continuance commitment dimensions. With Cronbach's alpha of 0.80, the TCM demonstrates strong internal consistency among its components. This high-reliability coefficient indicates that the TCM effectively measures the various aspects of organizational commitment among lecturers in this study.

Reliability analysis ensures that the instruments used in this study consistently measure the constructs they intend to assess. The reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients (0.71, and 0.80) indicate that the TIS-6, and TCM are reliable tools for examining turnover intentions, and organizational commitment. Reliability can be categorized as marginal if Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha = 0.60$ ) and good if Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ) (Gliner et al., 2000). Hence, Cronbach's alpha coefficients Turnover Intentions Scale (TIS-6) ( $\alpha = 0.71$ ) is categorized as marginal and the Three-Component Model (TCM) ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ) is categorized as strong. The researcher interprets the study findings with confidence, knowing that the instruments used produce consistent results. This enhances the credibility of conclusions drawn from the data regarding the relationships between organizational commitment and turnover intentions among lecturers in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Malaysia.

Table 1  
*Reliability of the Study (n=369)*

Instrument	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha Study	Interpretation
Turnover intentions (TIS-6)	6	0.71	Marginal
Three-Component Model (TCM)	18	0.80	High

**Table 2** shows that five of the six variables were significantly correlated. The strongest positive correlation, which would be considered a medium effect size according to Cohen (1988), was between the affective commitment and normative commitment,  $r(369) = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . This means that lecturers who had relatively high affective commitment were likely to have high normative commitment. The affective commitment also had a positive relationship with continuance commitment ( $r = 0.14$ ). The results indicate an inverse relationship between normative commitment and turnover intention among individuals ( $r = -0.36$ ). In other words, as normative commitment increases, turnover intention decreases. Lecturers with high normative commitment have a strong obligation to stay in the institutions and have low turnover intentions. This intention leads to a decision to stay in the institutions. Besides that, there is also an inverse relationship between affective commitment and turnover intention among individuals ( $r = -0.29$ ). In other words, as affective commitment

increases, turnover intention decreases. Lecturers with high affective commitment have highly positive experiences with the institutions are not intend to leave the institutions leading to a decision to stay in the institutions. Besides that, normative commitment is positively correlated with continuance commitment ( $r = 0.28$ ). This means that when normative commitment increases, the continuance commitment also will increase. The finding also shows that there is no correlation between continuance commitment with turnover intentions. Hence, whether the continuance commitment is high or low, there is no effect on turnover intentions.

Table 2

*Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Organizational Commitment (Affective, Continuance, and Normative) Variables (n = 369)*

Variable	TI	AC	CC	NC	M	SD
Turnover Intention (TI)	--	-0.29**	0.075	-0.36**	3.15	0.76
Affective Commitment (AC)		--	0.14**	0.39**	3.38	0.67
Continuance Commitment (CC)			--	0.28**	4.59	1.14
Normative Commitment (NC)				--	4.42	1.08

\* $p < 0.05$  \*\* $p < 0.01$

This study analyzed the correlation between organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) and turnover intention. The analysis also looked into the strength of the relationship (effect size). Table 3 shows the interpretation of the strength of a relationship or effect sizes by Morgan et al. (2011). Based on the findings in **Table 2**, shows that the highest relationship ( $r = 0.39$ ) is between affective commitment and normative commitment which the relationship is medium or typical level. The second highest is the relationship between normative commitment and turnover intentions ( $r = -0.36$ ). Three relationships recorded at small or typical small are the relationship between affective commitment and continuance commitment ( $r = 0.20$ ), the relationship between continuance commitment and normative commitment ( $r = 0.28$ ), and the relationship between affective commitment and turnover intentions ( $r = 0.29$ ).

Table 3

*Interpretation of the Strength of the Relationship (effect size)*

*(Morgan et al., 2011)*

General Interpretation of the Strength of a Relationship	The $d$ Family <sup>a</sup>		The $r$ Family <sup>b</sup>		
	$d$		$r$ and $\phi$	$R$	$\eta(\text{eta})^d$
Much larger than typical	$\geq  1.00 ^{c,e}$		$\geq  .70 $	$ .70 +$	$ .45 +$
Large or larger than typical	$ .80 $		$ .50 $	$ .51 $	$ .37 $
Medium or typical	$ .50 $		$ .30 $	$ .36 $	$ .24 $
Small or smaller than typical	$ .20 $		$ .10 $	$ .14 $	$ .10 $

The findings indicate that there is a negative relationship between normative commitment and turnover intention, such that stronger normative commitment is associated with lower turnover intention. Lecturers who have strong normative commitment have a strong

obligation to stay in the institutions even though they are not happy with the job or the roles but they stay when they feel that it is the righteous decision then. As lecturers, they have a strong sense of responsibility towards their students and thus are less likely to switch to different institutions or different types of jobs. Lack of other opportunities or no alternative employment becomes one of the factors the employee stays with the institutions (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). When employees perceive limited alternative employment opportunities, they may choose to remain despite dissatisfaction or low commitment. This emphasizes the role of external job market conditions in influencing retention. However, this research found that there is no relationship between continuance commitment with turnover intentions. Hence, the cost of living in the institutions is not the concern of the participants of this study. Exploring the absence of a relationship between continuance commitment and turnover intentions suggests that lecturers may not base their decision to stay or leave solely on practical factors like financial investment or loss. Other dimensions of commitment and motivation may exert stronger influences in this context.

This research finding was supported by Arslan Yürümezoğlu et al. (2019) that affective commitment and normative commitment have significant roles in influencing turnover intentions, whereas continuance commitment was not a predictor of turnover intentions. This finding also supports the finding by Imran et al. (2017) which highlighted the negative effect of affective and normative commitment toward turnover intentions but this study has a contradicting finding where there is no significant relationship between continuance commitment with turnover intentions. This finding is also consistent with previous studies where normative commitment has a significant negative effect on turnover intentions (Gajenderan et al., 2023). The result of this study has confirmed the statement by (Hussain et al., 2020) that organizational commitment *significant negative relationship with turnover intentions. Hence organizational commitment is a predictor of employee turnover.* Organizational commitment has a negative relationship with turnover intention (Dewi & Nurhayati, 2021). Hence, it supports the findings of this study. Knowing that there is a connection between organizational commitment and turnover intentions, the PHEIs in Malaysia should pay attention to increasing the lecturer's commitment to make them stay in the institutions.

From the institutional perspective, PHEIs should design comprehensive training and development programmes can be designed to increase the organizational commitment among the lecturers to retain them in the institutions. According to Shatila and Alozian (2019), there exists a significant relationship between training and development initiatives and turnover rates. Their findings highlight that effective training programs play a crucial role in mitigating turnover by equipping employees with necessary skills, enhancing job satisfaction, and fostering stronger organizational commitment. Hosen et al., (2024) highlighted that there is a relationship between training and development with organizational commitment. Hence, training and development increase the organizational commitment which leads to a reduction in turnover intentions. Training and development positively impact the retention of employees in the organization (Elsafty & Oraby, 2022). Employees who receive ongoing training and developmental opportunities that support their career growth tend to remain with the organization for longer periods (Kumar, 2022). Continuous training helps them enhance their skills and abilities and strengthens their connection with the organization, ultimately reducing turnover intentions.

In summary, the finding indicates that organizational commitment which is affective commitment and normative commitment shows a significant influence on the turnover intentions among lecturers at PHEIs in Malaysia. High levels of affective commitment and normative commitment result in low turnover intentions. Hence, affective commitment and normative commitment affect the intentions to leave the institution. However, continuance commitment has shown insignificant results. This finding shows that the objective of the research has been achieved where the researcher has confirmed that two types of organizational commitment; affective commitment and normative commitment affect the turnover intentions.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study found that there were significant relationships between affective commitment, normative commitment, and turnover intentions among lecturers in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Malaysia. The findings revealed that both affective and normative commitments were inversely related to turnover intentions, indicating that higher levels of affective and normative commitments were associated with lower intentions to leave the institution. On the other hand, there was no significant relationship found between continuance commitment and turnover intentions.

Based on these results, it is imperative for PHEIs in Malaysia to focus on strengthening affective and normative commitments among their lecturers to reduce turnover intentions. Strategies that promote a positive organizational culture, provide professional development opportunities, and foster positive relationships within the institution can help enhance lecturer commitment and decrease turnover rates.

In future research, it would be beneficial to explore additional factors that influence affective and normative commitments in academic settings, such as leadership styles, organizational support, and job satisfaction. Understanding these factors more deeply can inform targeted interventions and policies aimed at improving lecturer retention and organizational stability in Malaysian PHEIs.

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