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Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention among Lecturers in Private Higher Educational Institutions in Shandong Province in China

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention among the lecturers in private Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) in Shandong Province of China. 36-items from Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) and 6-items from Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) were utilized to measure the level of job satisfaction and turnover intention respectively. Through stratified random sampling, 4 private HEI was selected with 231 lecturers involved in this study. The level of job satisfaction was at moderate level (3.05 ± 1.15) and turnover intention was at high level (4.05 ± 0.97). Married lecturers were found to have higher satisfaction with the pay than those single lecturers. Significant negative correlation was found between all the dimensions of job satisfaction and turnover intention. Stepwise linear regression analysis further pin-points the important predictors of turnover intention and they are communication, promotion, pay, co-workers and supervision. This study recommended improvement in the pay level, effective incentive mechanism, fair promotion, solid professional development and rational operating procedure as intervention to curb turnover intention.

Keywords: Professional Development, Promotion, Pay, Co-workers, Supervision.

Introduction

China's private Higher Educational Institution (HEI) has achieved great success after more than three decades of development. Private HEI is a powerful complement to the public HEI and formed an important part of Chinese higher education. The rise of private HEI not only diversifies the development in China's higher education system, it also helps to rationalize the allocation of educational resources. The number of HEI in China has risen tremendously from 2305 to 2990 in the past one decade (MOE, 2019). This effectively resolves the existing shortage of higher education for huge pool of talent demand in China. It made an important contribution to the

transformation of Chinese higher education from elite oriented to the massive public (Fan, 2002). It creates accessibility for everyone with capability to attend higher education.

Private education is a big industry in China, with estimated market value around RMB 2.68 trillion (Deloitte, 2018). However, there are various challenges in the internal mechanisms of private education that restricted their development especially in terms of talent management. Most private educational institution, including HEI face the shortage of talent, high staff turnover rate, higher requirement to meet industrial changes and poor incentive mechanism. Education industry is a labour intensive industry since students require emotional support and personalized guidance. Lecturer is the core human resource for every educational institution to carry out all the teaching and research work. They form the basic foundation of sustainable development in higher education and the key person to push the rankings higher.

Turnover rate continues to plague both public and private HEI that resulted in continuous loss of teaching staff. There is high turnover rate of teaching staff in China with some studies pointed out that turnover rate of private college lecturers reached up to 96.6% (Zhang, 2009). Almost 50% of college lecturers even took up secondary occupation instead of focussing on their teaching and research activities. Excellent and young lecturers could be easily recruited in other countries with high mobility in China. This has serious impact on the long-term development of private higher education in China which can cause further instability among the teaching staff, restricts the improvement of teaching quality and reduces the core competitiveness. Private HEI also has to bear the increasing cost for training and development of teaching staff when the turnover rate is higher.

Hence, this study explores the influence of individual dimensions of job satisfaction on the turnover intention among lecturers in private HEI in Shandong province of China. The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention among the lecturers in private HEI.

Literature Review

Job Satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction resonates strongly with the management. This is because one of the key roles of management is to motivate their employees, mobilize their enthusiasm and boost their creativity using various methods. All this is only to achieve one sole objective, which is for all employees to do their best to complete the tasks assigned by the organization and ultimately achieve the goals of the organization. The definitions of job satisfaction also have evolved over the years from being a feeling of emotion towards a judgement on their satisfaction. In some cases, job satisfaction represents the extent to which an employee's hopes, desires and expectations of the employment are being fulfilled. In this study, job satisfaction is defined as a form of perceptions of fulfilment that based on their daily chores and positively correlated with higher levels of job performance (Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

Many studies have pointed out that educator job satisfaction have positive impact on student achievement (Michaelowa, 2002) and work performance (Ong, 2007) while reduce the motivation to leave the teaching profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011) and burnout (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Effective incentive plays a huge role in job satisfaction. It ignites employees'

work enthusiasm, encourage employees to work harder, let employees generate desires to surpass themselves and others, and release their potential strong internal drive to dedicate their enthusiasm to company's long-term goals to achieve a double-win situation between individuals and organization (Porter, Bigley, & Steers, 2003). However, incentive is not the only things that boost job satisfaction. A broad range of studies have probe into the source of job satisfaction among teaching staff in HEI (Amazt & Idris, 2011). Some other possible sources of job satisfaction included nature of work, personal growth, advancement opportunity, recognition, autonomy, creativity, contribution, job security, work environment, creativity, status and salary (Ololube, 2006).

From there, multiple theories and models have been put forward by different researchers based on different research perspectives as well as research methods from single or multiple job satisfaction theories (Shen, Basri, & Asimiran, 2018). Some of the models have strong practical value and operability. For example, Porter and Lawler's motivation model (Khanka, 2006) depicted the complex impact of reward in boosting job satisfaction, Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 1995) suggested changes to job scope and autonomy and Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) illustrated the importance of job demand and job resources in achieving the desired organizational outcome.

Turnover Intentions

Turnover intention refers to the possibility that an individual will change his or her work in a certain period of time. In this study, turnover intention is defined as the contemplated and deliberate resolve to leave the organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993). In view of the fact that separation has a great impact on the life, family and occupation of the employees, the employees usually choose to leave the company only after careful consideration (Arokiasamy, 2013). Thus, employees would more or less show their turnover intention before formal separation. Similarly, various models have been postulated ranging such as Mobley's (1977) Intermediate Linkage Model that laid out the process from job evaluation to intention to quit and Jackofsky's (1984) Integrated Process Model that looked at intention to quit from multiple facets of personal and organizational (Singh & Sharma, 2015).

Li & Lu (2014) analysed the China's market and found that the average turnover rate is 0.11 years with the highest of 47.3% between 3 to 6 months. Through a survey of more than 3000 new lecturers, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that the rate of lecturer turnover in private HEI is obviously higher than that in public HEI. The lecturer turnover rate is about 26% per year in private HEI, while public HEI is only about 11%. The study also found that if the new lecturers received guidance and support from the school during their initial duties, they were relatively less likely to leave the industry or change job when receiving non-monetary incentive. The more support they have, the less likely they are to leave. Similar results were reported that turnover rate of lecturers in private HEI was more than double than that in public HEI (Rathakrishnan, Imm, & Kok, 2016).

Price (2004) found that turnover will be relatively lower when lecturers have more autonomy and management support. Hanushek and Rivkin (2007) found that the increase in salary can indeed reduce the possibility of male lecturers' turnover intention. However, this

effect may rise and then decline with the increase in teaching experience. These changes in wages are more sensitive for young male lecturers, but they are less influential for female lecturers who are less experienced, and there is no effect on female lecturers with rich teaching experience. Another study by Liu and Onwuegbuzie (2012) found that possible reasons for Chinese teachers' turnover to be high stress level, low pay, lack of breaks, heavy workload and problematic student's behaviour.

In another study by Nawaz, Khalid and Khan (2018) on university lecturers in Karachi, Pakistan, they found significant negative correlation between proactive personality, perceived organizational support, developmental feedback and job complexity with turnover intention. The study suggested improvement in management policies that boost the contextual factors of organizational support and developmental feedback to the lecturer. Other related studies on turnover intention also identified that work engagement, burnout, organizational citizenship behaviour, work alienation (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010), job engagement (Mxenge, Dywill & Basaza, 2014), job demand and work schedule flexibility were significantly correlated with turnover intention (Thirapatsakun, Kuntonbutr, & Mechida, 2015).

Methodology

In China, Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) is divided into three main categories: Regular HEIs, Adult HEIs and Other non-government HEIs. There is a total of 3737 HEIs in China (MOE, 2019). In Shandong, there are a total of 145 regular HEIs (67 HEI offering degree programmes and 78 higher vocational colleges). Out of these 145 regular HEI, only 3 are under Central Ministries and Agencies. The remaining 142 are private HEIs. In this study, the population is the lecturers of private regular HEI in Shandong Province. Out of the 142 private HEIs, four HEI were selected randomly: Qingdao University, Qingdao University of Technology, Shandong Huayu University of Technology and Qingdao University of Technology.

There were 231 lecturers took part in this study. The questionnaire comprised of 3 sections: demographic, job satisfaction and turnover intention. The level of job satisfaction was measured with 36-items from Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1994) that had 9 dimensions: pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, nature of work and communication. It must be noted that some of the items were reverse-scored items. On the other hand, the level of turnover intention was measured with 6-items scale developed by Bothma and Roodt (2013). Bothma and Roodt [ibid] generated TIS-6 from the 15-item scale developed by Jacobs and Roodt (2008). This instrument had strong evidence of reliability, $\alpha = .93$ (Martin and Roodt, 2008) and $\alpha = .80$ (Mxenge, Dywill, & Basaza, 2014).

This study was conducted in China where most of the participant understands Chinese much better than English. This study also found the Chinese version of the instrument from past studies. A pilot study was conducted on a HEI with 30 lecturers that were not included as part of this study to prevent testing threat to internal validity of the instrument. As lecturers were usually busy, this study utilized online questionnaire where lecturers could fill in during their free time. They were informed of the two-months duration for the data collection.

Results

Table 1 showed that among the 231 lecturers, most of them were female 164 (71.00%), single 120 (51.95%), between the age group between 31 to 40 years old 118 (51.08%), with highest qualification of Degree 125 (54.11%), held the position of lecturer 152 (65.80%) and had been teaching for 6 to 10 years 111 (48.05%).

Table 1: Frequency table of the respondents

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	67	29.00%
	Female	164	71.00%
Marital status	Single	120	51.95%
	Married	111	48.05%
Age	< 30	32	13.85%
	31 to 40	118	51.08%
	41 to 50	76	32.90%
	> 50	5	2.16%
Highest qualification	Degree	125	54.11%
	Master	85	36.80%
	PhD	21	9.09%
Job position	Assistant lecturer	40	17.32%
	Lecturer	152	65.80%
	Associate Professor	33	14.29%
	Professor	6	2.60%
Years of teaching	< 2 years	29	12.55%
	2 to 5 years	29	12.55%
	6 to 10 years	111	48.05%
	> 10 years	62	26.84%

Meanwhile, Table 2 depicted the level of each dimension in job satisfaction and turnover intention. Five of the dimensions of job satisfaction were found to be at low level: pay, promotion, operating procedures, nature of work and communication. All the remaining dimensions of job satisfaction as well as the overall job satisfaction showed a moderate level. When it was studied in details, it was found that most of the lecturers marked *“agree moderately”* in *“raises are too few and far between”*, *“Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult”* and *“Work assignments are often not fully explained”*. However, the level of turnover intention was high.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of research variables

Variable	Research variable	N	Mean	SD	Level
Job satisfaction	Pay	4	2.52	0.99	Low
	Promotion	4	2.57	1.00	Low
	Supervision	4	3.20	1.23	Moderate
	Fringe benefits	4	3.42	1.36	Moderate
	Contingent rewards	4	3.26	0.98	Moderate
	Operating procedures	4	2.71	0.78	Low
	Co-workers	4	3.30	0.93	Moderate
	Nature of Work	4	2.79	1.04	Low
	Communication	4	2.72	1.17	Low
		Total	36	3.05	1.15
Turnover intention		6	4.05	0.97	High

Among the demographic factors analysed, gender, marital status, age, highest qualification, job position and years of teaching, only significant difference on the level of job satisfaction and turnover intention due to demographic factors are only observed in marital status and years of teaching. Table 3 displayed the comparison on the level of job satisfaction and turnover intention based on marital status and only pay was found to be significantly different between those lecturers who were singled and those who were married. In this study, it is found that single lecturers were found to have higher level of job satisfaction in terms of pay as compared to those married ones ($t = 2.31$; $p < .05$).

Table 3: Comparison on Level of Job Satisfaction and Turnover intention based on marital status

Dimension	Single		Married		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Pay	2.66	1.05	2.36	0.90	2.31*
Promotion	2.66	1.06	2.47	0.92	1.45
Supervision	3.16	1.28	3.24	1.18	-0.52
Fringe benefits	3.41	1.39	3.42	1.34	-0.08
Contingent rewards	3.17	1.02	3.35	0.92	-1.44
Operating procedures	2.74	0.79	2.68	0.76	0.56
Co-workers	3.30	0.90	3.30	0.96	0.02
Nature of Work	2.77	1.04	2.81	1.04	-0.32
Communication	2.76	1.30	2.68	1.02	0.54
Turnover intention	3.93	1.01	4.17	0.91	-1.87

Note: * Significant at .05 level, ** Significant at .01 level

Based on Table 4, this study revealed negative correlation between all the dimensions of job satisfaction and turnover intention. The highest negative correlation was found between communication and turnover intention where $r = -.683$; $p < .01$ while the lowest negative correlation was found between co-workers and turnover intention where $r = -.175$; $p < .01$. This result depicted that when the level of job satisfaction among lecturers is high, the level of turnover intention would be low.

Table 4: Correlation between dimensions of job satisfaction and turnover intention

	Dimensions	Turnover Intention
1	Pay	-.288**
2	Promotion	-.621**
3	Supervision	-.536**
4	Fringe benefits	-.321**
5	Contingent rewards	-.274**
6	Operating procedures	-.305**
7	Co-workers	-.175**
8	Nature of Work	-.218**
9	Communication	-.683**

Note: * Significant at .05 level, ** Significant at .01 level

Regression allows the determination of relationship between variables in a form of best-fit straight line. Since there are quite a number of dimensions in job satisfaction, stepwise

regression is a technique that allows the determination of few important dimensions while keeping the model as realistic and complete as possible. Table 5 depicted the several models where each dimension of job satisfaction is added one after another in terms of significance. The final model, which incorporated five dimensions of job satisfaction yield significant correlation, $R^2 = .586$, $p < .01$. This indicated that these dimensions of job satisfaction accounted for 58.6% of the total variation in turnover intention. Table 6 presented the standard regression equation also established that communication was the strongest predictor of turnover intention among lecturers in HEI of Shandong province in China.

Standard regression equation:

$$\text{Turnover Intention} = 6.72 - 0.35 * C + 0.27 * Pr - 0.13 * P + 0.12 * CW + 0.09 * S$$

C = Communication, Pr = Promotion, P = Pay, CW = Co-workers and S = Supervision

Table 5: Model summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Dev
1	.683 ^a	.467	.465	0.710
2	.737 ^b	.543	.539	0.658
3	.750 ^c	.563	.557	0.646
4	.760 ^d	.578	.570	0.636
5	.765 ^e	.586	.577	.631

Table 6: Stepwise regression analysis of Job Satisfaction on Turnover Intention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	5.58	0.12		47.28	0.00
	Communication	-0.57	0.04	-0.68	-14.16	0.00
2	Constant	5.99	0.13		46.91	0.00
	Communication	-0.40	0.05	-0.49	-8.87	0.00
	Promotion	-0.33	0.05	-0.34	-6.18	0.00
3	Constant	6.26	0.15		41.39	0.00
	Communication	-0.39	0.05	-0.48	-8.85	0.00
	Promotion	-0.31	0.05	-0.32	-5.80	0.00
	Pay	-0.14	0.04	-0.14	-3.18	0.00
4	Constant	6.65	0.20		32.56	0.00
	Communication	-0.38	0.04	-0.46	-8.65	0.00
	Promotion	-0.32	0.05	-0.32	-6.04	0.00
	Pay	-0.13	0.04	-0.14	-3.06	0.00
	Co-workers	-0.13	0.05	-0.12	-2.81	0.01
5	Constant	6.72	0.21		32.69	0.00
	Communication	-0.35	0.05	-0.43	-7.60	0.00
	Promotion	-0.27	0.06	-0.28	-4.95	0.00
	Pay	-0.13	0.04	-0.13	-3.03	0.00
	Co-workers	-0.12	0.05	-0.12	-2.67	0.01
	Supervision	-0.09	0.04	-0.12	-2.11	0.04

Discussion

The findings of this study are consistent with the findings from Toker (2011), where there are lower satisfaction ratings for compensation, supervision, wages, and fringe benefits. This is not surprising as lecturers always complaint that there is a lot of unnecessary paperwork due to the operating procedures that took toll on their job satisfaction. On top of that, lack of communication between the departments and between the management and lecturers makes it difficult for lecturers to complete their paperwork.

On the other hand, this study demonstrated that turnover intention among the lecturers in private HEI was at a high level. With the exponential expansion of private higher education in China, lecturers are spoilt for choices of employment. Thus, lecturers are not hesitant to change job at any point of time, especially those with low level of job satisfaction. While gender has no statistically significant effect on job satisfaction and turnover intention, there is statistically

significant effect of highest qualification and job position on job satisfaction. Only highest qualification has statistically significant effect on turnover intention.

Significant negative correlation was found between turnover intention and job satisfaction. This is probably because pay is usually the single most important factor for employees in choosing the company to work. More capable employees are more eager to pursue jobs with higher pay, which is the normal psychological demand of human for material incentives. This is consistent with the study conducted by Mustapha and Zakaria (2013) on academic staff in public universities in Kelantan, Malaysia.

Similarly, promotion is usually tied with higher pay slip for employees. The increase in pay through promotion is higher compared to the increase through years of service. Therefore, once employees find that their salary is at disadvantage for a long time in the company, or when there is a large gap between their pay with that of other company, it would inevitably lead to mentality of leaving their current company.

Job satisfaction with operating procedures refers to a series of subjective perceptions of lecturers on the campus, office and work operating procedures. Increasing number of researches show that employees' requirements for the working procedures are second only to pay. Good operating procedures will motivate people to move toward better goals. Poor working procedures will lead to lower employee's efficiency that can lead to entire organization experiencing stagnation.

Another aspect that affects employee's efficiency is communication. Thus, communication in the organization is often an important consideration for the lecturers when choosing to stay or leave. This is because effective communication ensures that work could be done accordingly and lecturers would not feel frustrated.

However, unlike pay, fringe benefits are usually considered less important than pay. Fringe benefits include sabbatical leaves, medical insurance coverage and decent level of tuition fees waived for their children studying in that institution. In this study, there is no significant negative correlation between fringe benefits and turnover intention. This is not surprising as most employees considered sabbatical leaves and medical insurance as compulsory to be provided by the company. After all, China has work policy that mandates all organization to provide insurance coverage to their employee. Thus, fringe benefits provided would be more or less the same throughout the private HEI industry.

Most lecturers considered contingent rewards and supervision to be standardized across private HEI. Contingent rewards appraisal is a method of assessing employees and is implemented by human resources department. Lecturer usually has no qualms in contingent rewards since lecturers are commonly assessed based on the number of their publications. Since lecturers work independently most of the time, supervision is rarely needed by them. The same goes for job satisfaction with co-workers.

Job satisfaction in nature of work refers to the perception of the lecturer on tasks being provided to them. Since lecturer can only be assigned with providing lecture and carried out research, it is expected that it has no correlation with turnover intention. The job scope of lecturer is usually quite limited in private HEI as it is a private and profit oriented organization.

Practical Implications

Since five dimensions of job satisfaction factors were found to be significant predictors of turnover intention, steps should be taken to build better communication channel, promotion system, pay system and develop a favourable environment that foster strong co-workers and supervision relationship. The results of this study are consistent with the studies conducted by Oosthuizen, Coetzee and Munro (2016) on information technology employees, also Martin and Roodt (2008) on South African tertiary institution employees. Based on the several models and evaluation of current situation in private HEI lecturers, the following measures are important to boost lecturers' job satisfaction: efficient communication channel, fairness and justice in promotion, effective incentive mechanism, appropriate pay level and strong continuous professional development programme.

Efficient Communication Channel

Lecturers are knowledgeable, highly-skilled workers and at such, there will be more demand for autonomy. Good operating procedures should provide autonomy for lecturers to bring out their creativity in teaching and performs their tasks. It should mobilize the lecturers and stimulate their creativity, thus improving the efficiency of all aspects. However, there are many current operating procedures that are restrictive and tend to focus on punishments on those who disobey. While it is good to have proper standard operating procedure, too many operating procedures will create unnecessary paperwork and bogged down the lecturers.

In order to better understand the needs of lecturers, regular feedback form should be provided to lecturers to voice out any dissatisfaction on redundant work. Examples includes regular meeting for all lecturers with the administrative personnel and higher management. This helps management to understand better the working attitude and status of lecturers in a timely and accurate manner. This also reflects the humanization of management, and enables managers to fundamentally discover some shortcomings or drawbacks in the existing system.

Fairness and Justice in Promotion

The lecturers of private HEI hold a high expectation for promotion. However, some HEI have obviously undermines fairness within the organization due to personal relationship. This makes those lecturers who have performed well, whom should have opportunities for promotion, did not receive their due promotions. They would have a lot of negative emotions that further affects their work enthusiasm and even leads to the intention of leaving. Hence, managers must adhere to the principle of fairness and justice. Excellent lecturers must feel that they have opportunities for promotion. Only then can organization move forward and overall quality of HEI be continuously improved.

Effective Incentive Mechanism

Most organization provided adequate bonuses to their employees based on their performance. Many past researches have demonstrated that incentives encourage knowledge sharing (41 & 42). This is particularly important as HEI are knowledge-intensive organizations [43]. It boosts the motivation of lecturers especially those who performed well. While monetary

incentive is crucial, non-monetary incentive should not be neglected as well. Non-monetary incentive can come from a gift, a token of appreciation or even a personalized thank you notes to those lecturers who go the extra miles. Unlike bonuses which are only given once a year, non-monetary incentive provides a constant fuel of motivation to the lecturers.

The starting point and purpose of the incentive is to meet the needs of the employees, but the needs of the employees are complex and changeable, and will vary from person to person. Thus, the main task of the incentive is to highlight the most urgent needs of the employees. The management should conduct in-depth and practical investigations and studies, constantly understand the changing needs of lecturers in order to develop an effective incentive mechanism for lecturers.

While lecturers usually have high self-esteem, they do hope to be respected by others, attach great importance to their own reputation and achieve higher positions to increase their own value. This required the management to focus on lecturers who have special contributions or outstanding teaching skills. They ought to be given timely monetary and non-monetary incentives, such as timely and positive recognition as well as appropriate bonuses. Only then would lecturers feel truly valued, being taken care of and respected to further stimulate their potential.

In reality, lecturers actually value the non-monetary incentives, such as reputation, achievement and public praise. This is in line with the psychological needs as reflected in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In order to develop an excellent incentive mechanism, the management of private HEI should ensure the timely follow-up of non-monetary incentives. It should be timely and appropriate, monetary and non-monetary incentives must complement each other to continuously boost lecturers' job satisfaction.

Appropriate Pay Level

Firstly, compared with the favourable pay of public HEI lecturers, the overall pay level of private HEI lecturers is relatively low. Even if compare with average pay growth rate, it is a smaller increase compare to other fields (Min, 2004). The pay growth rate is even lower especially those young lecturers with little working experience. The pay of lecturers is not competitive in the market and sometimes, it cannot even meet the basic living necessity of lecturers living in the city.

With exception of a small number of private HEI, many HEI have difficulty in maintaining a good profit margin, let alone providing sufficient research fund for lecturers. While the fees paid by students in private HEI are higher, the income of lecturers is not significantly higher than those working in public HEI. This shows that the management of private HEI did not paid much attention to the importance of salary for the long-term development of the HEI itself. The pay and fringe benefits are basic security of employees in any organizations. Management should consider the wage policy, appropriate salary adjustment and proper fringe benefits mechanism are in place. If the lower level basic needs according to Maslow's hierarchy are not satisfied, it is difficult for lecturers to focus on improving their performance. In terms of funding, it is necessary to increase lecturers' salaries to be competitive in order to retain the high performance lecturers.

Continuous Professional Development

Cambell et al. (1970) defined training as a planned learning experience designed to bring about permanent change in an individual's knowledge, attitudes or skills. Ramirez and Mabey (2005) stated training and development as any types of formal and informal training in development activities to enhance their knowledge, abilities and skills. Many researches recently have pointed out that continuous professional development is an effective way to boost job satisfaction among educators (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Khairuldin, 2018; Imam, Ali & Soo, 2018)

Younger lecturers are the core force for development of private HEI. These young and energetic lecturers are passionate about their work. This study has shown that there is a significant difference in overall job satisfaction for lecturers of different ages, academic qualifications and job positions. While overall job satisfaction of young lecturers is at moderate level, it is lower than those older lecturers. Therefore, private HEI should increase the opportunity of training and development for young lecturers. This would strengthen the professional guidance of young lecturers. All lecturers should also be supported to continue their studies towards higher qualification, provided with opportunities to explore the collaboration with other research institutions and be supported with various research funds. In order to improve the scientific research ability and teaching capability of lecturers, high performance lecturers ought to be promoted and not being delayed due to lack of working experience.

Management should develop some practical development programs, such as selecting experienced lecturers to provide peer-to-peer guidance to younger lecturers who are less experienced, encourage young lecturers to actively apply for research projects and encourage them to join existing research teams to become familiar with their profession. This would allow lecturers to explore their own points of interests, cross-field researches and stimulate their creativity to truly achieve individual and organizational win-win situation.

Recommendation for Future Research

Due to the limitations of time, the scope of this study is limited to a selected number of private HEI in Shandong. Thus, this study would have a certain degree of regional generalization. The development of private HEI is slow with insufficient incentive and unstable lecturers. There are also large macro-environmental reasons, such as policies, institutions and large environmental aspect reasons. The recommendations of related measures to boost job satisfaction of lecturers are purely based on the results of this study. Therefore, the reference to practice may have certain limitations, which is also the limitation of quantitative research.

In summary, it is hoped that future researchers will be able to expand the scope to cover other states in China to increase the degree of generalizations. At the same time, qualitative research would allow deeper understanding behind the nature of high turnover intention among the lecturers in private HEI. Some studies have also pointed out the fluctuations of the level of job satisfaction among lecturers across the years. Thus, longitudinal studies can be conducted to affirm this.

Conclusion

This study discussed the level of job satisfaction, turnover intention and the relationship between these variables among 231 lecturers from 4 out of 40 private HEI in Shandong, China. Total job satisfaction was at moderate level while the turnover was at high level in these private HEI. Among the demographic factors, only marital status has effect on the level of job satisfaction of lecturers. The significant negative correlation found between job satisfaction and turnover intention was consistent with many past studies. Thus, this highlighted urgent need to boost job satisfaction and curb turnover intention among lecturers in private HEI. It is hopeful that this study shed light on the current situation of private HEI in Shandong province of China.

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