

## HOW PAY TRANSPARENCY AND LIVING WAGE DEMANDS IMPACT EMPLOYEE RETENTION: OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AS MEDIATOR AND LEADER'S EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS MODERATOR IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES OF HYDERABAD

Afzal Khan Memon<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Saba Shaikh<sup>\*2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Senior Lecturer, Department of Management Sciences, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST) University, Hyderabad Campus

<sup>\*2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST) University, Hyderabad Campus

<sup>1</sup>afzal.khan@hyd.szabist.edu.pk, <sup>\*2</sup>saba.shaikh@hyd.szabist.edu.pk

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20151665>

### Keywords

Pay Transparency, living wage demands, employee retention intentions, occupational stress, leader emotional intelligence, private universities, Pakistan.

### Article History

Received: 17 March 2026

Accepted: 27 April 2026

Published: 13 May 2026

Copyright @Author

Corresponding Author: \*  
Dr. Saba Shaikh

### Abstract

With the increasing inflation, low salary packages and lack of pay transparency, the retention of employees has turned out to be one of the challenges faced by private universities in Pakistan. The effect of pay transparency and living wage demands on the intentions of faculty members to remain in private universities of Hyderabad, Pakistan is investigated in this study. The mediating effect of occupational stress and the moderating effect of leader emotional intelligence are also explored in the study. The study is grounded on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and the Social Exchange theory (SET) about the impact of compensation and supportive leadership on employee commitment and low level of stress. A quantitative and explanatory research design was used. The data was gathered from 127 full time faculty members with the help of a structured questionnaire by the 5-point Likert scale. The data analysis used descriptive analysis, reliability test and hypothesis testing, which were analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS-SEM. The results show that the relationships between pay transparency and living wages with employee retention intentions are positive, and are mediated by occupational stress. When leader emotional intelligence is used, the adverse effects of stress on retention are minimized because the work environment becomes conducive. The study offers practical implications to the University administrators for the enhancement of compensation policy, minimizing stress levels among faculty members, and enhancing retention policy in the Private Sector universities of Pakistan.

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most pressing issues in higher education institutions, especially in private universities, is employee attrition, which has detrimental effects on academic standards, performance in the university, and the satisfaction and quality of life of students. Economic volatility, high inflation and low

compensation have further increased worries about employee retention in developing nations like Pakistan. Compensation systems that are fair and transparent, and connected to employees' financial requirements, have been shown to increase their commitment to organizations (Stofberg et al., 2022; Gutierrez et

al., 2025). Unclear pay structures lead to higher employee dissatisfaction, stress, and turnover intentions, compared to having adequate salaries (Kibria et al., 2024). As a result, universities are increasingly looking for compensation-oriented solutions to attract qualified faculty members and keep them in their ranks and also keep organizations stable. The issue of transparency and living wage requirements has recently come into the spotlight as key considerations in staff attitude and behaviour. Pay transparency means openness and clarity of the salary structure, pay policies, and compensation decisions in an organization (Bamberger, 2023). Likewise, the concept of living wage has placed importance on the wages that are provided to the employees which are enough to cover their basic living needs, transportation, healthcare, education, etc. (Dawani & Sayeed, 2024). A previous study highlighted that transparent pay systems positively affect employee perceptions of fairness, trust and organizational justice and in turn these employee perceptions positively affect intentions to stay with the organization (Tenhiala, 2024; Stofberg, 2022). Similarly, paying employees a living wage minimises financial pressures and helps to increase motivation and job satisfaction (Sharif & Khan, 2023).

It has been identified that stress experienced by the individual during work is one of the leading factors that affect the retention of employees in higher education institutions. Stress is a common problem among faculty members due to heavy workload, financial stress, unclear compensation policies and lack of organizational support (Shah et al., 2021, Samad et al., 2021). Conservation of Resources (COR) theory suggests that employees will feel stressed when they see that valuable resources like the fair compensation they receive and job security are being threatened or are not available (Hobfoll, 2021). Employees who are experiencing chronic stress at work are less likely to be committed to the organization and have a higher likelihood of quitting. But emotionally intelligent leadership can minimize the negative impact of stress at the workplace by offering emotional support, effective communication and positive working

environment (Ansari & Asad, 2023; Munawar et al., 2024). High emotional intelligent leaders enable staff to cope with stress better, enhance staff relationships and staff satisfaction.

Though few studies have considered the joint impact of pay transparency, living wage demands, occupational stress and leader emotional intelligence in Pakistani higher education institutions, there is a growing number of international investigations that examine compensation fairness and employee retention. There have been a number of studies on big cities like Karachi and Lahore while comparatively few studies have been conducted in private universities in Hyderabad. In view of the above, this study attempts to explore the influence of pay transparency and living wage demands on employee's retention intentions among the faculty members of private universities of Hyderabad with occupational stress as a mediator and leader emotional intelligence as a moderator.

#### **Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to examine the effects of pay transparency and living wage demands on employee retention intentions among faculty members in private universities of Hyderabad, with occupational stress as a mediating variable and leader emotional intelligence as a moderating variable.

#### **Research Objectives**

1. To examine the impact of pay transparency on employee retention intentions among faculty in private universities of Hyderabad.
2. To investigate the influence of living wage demands on employee retention intentions in private universities of Hyderabad.
3. To analyze the mediating role of occupational stress in the relationship between pay transparency and living wage demands on employee retention intentions.
4. To evaluate the moderating effect of leader's emotional intelligence on the relationship between occupational stress and employee retention intentions.
5. To provide practical recommendations for improving employee retention strategies in private universities of Hyderabad through

effective pay practices and leadership development.

### Literature Review

Employee retention has become an important discussion in the higher education sector, particularly in private universities, with academic quality, institutional performance, and student satisfaction being impacted by faculty turnover. Compensation fairness, career development opportunities, organizational support and leadership practices are the primary factors that have been identified in previous studies that influence employees to stay in an organization (McPhee, 2020; Tariq et al., 2024). The inflation and economic instability in Pakistan has led to concerns about the adequacy of compensation and the welfare of employees. The findings indicate that staff are more inclined to be dedicated to an organization if they feel that the pay is transparent and fair (Stofberg et al., 2022). Pay transparency enhances an organization's trust, perceptions of justice, and employee morale which positively affect retention intentions (Tenhiala et al., 2024). Likewise, there is a growing focus on living wage demands due to the adverse financial stress and loss of job satisfaction experienced by employees as a result of low wages (Kibria et al., 2024).

Another crucial factor that influences employee retention in educational institutions is occupational stress. Stress is a common phenomenon faced by faculty members due to high workload, financial stress, unclear promotion policies and lack of support from the organization (Shah et al., 2021; Samad et al., 2021). Stress is detrimental to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee performance, all of which are important factors in organizational performance. But research indicates that stressful situations may be less detrimental if emotionally intelligent leadership is in place to foster supportive and positive workplace conditions (Ansari & Asad, 2023). The leaders who are emotionally intelligent are more capable of communication, empathy, and trust among workers and therefore, the well-being of workers and their intentions on job retention are improved (Munawar et al., 2024). Even

though the number of international studies on this topic has increased over the years, few studies have focused on how pay transparency, living wage demands, occupational stress, and leader emotional intelligence collectively affect the quality of leadership in private universities of Pakistan, and specifically in the city of Hyderabad.

### Theoretical Framework

The present study will be based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory suggested by Hobfoll (1989). According to COR theory, employees are seeking to gain, maintain, and safeguard resources of value to them: financial resources, resources from the organization, and psychological resources. The theory suggests that stress happens when these resources are threatened or depleted (Hobfoll, 2021). In the scope of this research, low salary and lack of transparency in salary could also lead to financial insecurity and psychological stress for faculty which can lead to low commitment towards the organization and high intention to quit for faculty. Hence, clear compensation schemes and living wages can help workers maintain valuable resources and minimize work-related stress.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) of Blau (1964) is also used to support the study. According to SET, employee-org relations are reciprocal exchange and fair. When organizations are fair, provide support and have equitable compensation practices, employees tend to respond positively (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Trust and organizational commitment in higher educational institutions are positively related to faculty's perception of compensation systems' transparency and fairness, thus enhancing the retention intentions. On the other hand, when employees perceive unfairness in compensation, their relationship with the organizations becomes poorer and the probability of their turnover intentions rises.

Stress is regarded as a mediating variable in this study because the stress is a psychological medium by which compensation-related factors mediate in employee retention intentions. COR theory suggests that financial stress, ambiguity in pay, and poor pay lead to the depletion of resources which then contributes

to occupational stress (Shah et al., 2021). Stress negatively influences employees' emotional conditions, satisfaction and organizational commitment, and consequently their intention to leave the organization. Thus, indirect effect of pay transparency and living wage demands on faculty retention intentions in private universities are explained by occupational stress.

Emotionally intelligent leaders can alleviate negative consequences of workplace stress for employees and therefore, leader emotional intelligence is included as a moderating variable. High emotional intelligence leaders are characterized by having empathy, emotional regulation, and supportive communication skills, as well as by being good at managing conflict (Ansari & Asad, 2023). These leadership behaviours relieve employees from stress and build a positive work culture which enhance employee commitment and satisfaction. Following COR and SET theories, emotionally intelligent leaders create an environment of emotional and social support which helps employees avoid emotional stressors and improves the intention to stay on the job. Based on the above, it is expected that

leader emotional intelligence will moderate the relationship between negative relationship between occupational stress and employee retention intentions.

### Hypotheses

H1: Pay transparency has a positive and significant effect on employee retention intentions in private universities of Hyderabad.

H2: Living wage demands have a positive and significant effect on employee retention intentions in private universities of Hyderabad.

H3: Occupational stress mediates the relationship between pay transparency and employee retention intentions in private universities of Hyderabad.

H4: Occupational stress mediates the relationship between living wage demands and employee retention intentions in private universities of Hyderabad.

H5: Leader's emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between occupational stress and employee retention intentions, such that the negative effect of occupational stress on retention is weaker when leader's emotional intelligence is high.

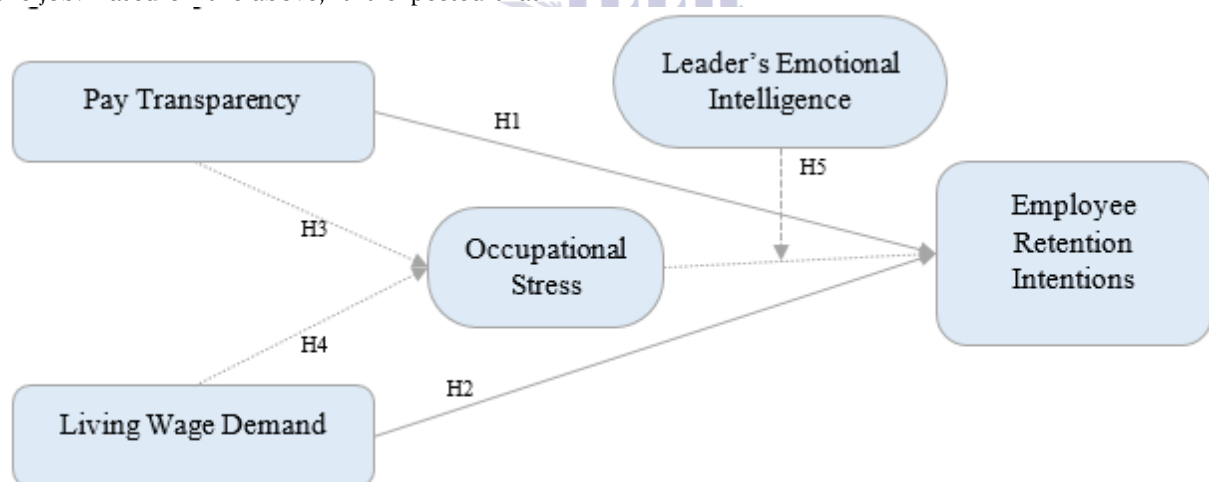


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

**Source:** Developed by author after review of existing research.

### Methodology

The research approach used in this study was quantitative research with a positivist research philosophy to investigate the impact of pay transparency and living wage demands on the retention intention of faculty members working

in private universities of Hyderabad. The study employed explanatory and cross sectional research design in order to study the causal relationship between the variables at one particular time in the study. The respondents were the full-time faculty members at private universities of Hyderabad, Pakistan. The purposive sampling technique was used because the respondents had firsthand knowledge about

the compensation practices, workplace stress, and leadership behavior (Makwana et al., 2023; Taherdoost, 2022). According to Hair et al. (2022), the sample size of the study was 127 faculty members, which is considered sufficient for data analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and hypothesis testing. A structured questionnaire with a five point likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) was used to collect primary data.

SPSS and SmartPLS software were used in analyzing the collected data. The descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and data screening were performed using SPSS while the direct, mediating, and moderating relationships among the variables of the study were tested using the software SmartPLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2024). To ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs, the measurement model was assessed by the indicators of outer loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (Hair et al., 2020), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Fornell-Larcker Criterion, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2015). Ethical issues such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation were adhered to to ensure that the research carried out was responsible and credible (Saunders et al., 2019).

**Measures:** The measures for pay transparency were adapted from Colella et al. (2007) and Day (2011). The scale comprised 7 items (PT1 – PT7) to assess employees' perception of compensation policies: clarity, openness and fairness. Items sampled were: "My organization's pay structure is clearly communicated" and "Pay decisions are made and explained clearly to staff." Items adapted from Howell, Kuperminc, and Rose (2019) were used to measure living wage demands. The construct comprised of 6 items (LWD1–LWD6) related to employees' perceptions of the sufficiency of income for living and work requirements. Examples of the items used were: "I earn enough to meet my personal and family needs" and "My salary is in line with the cost of living. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

developed by Cohen, Kamarck and Mermelstein (1983) was used to measure occupational stress. The scale consisted of 10 items (OS1 – OS10) that evaluated the emotional stress and pressures of faculty at work. Sample items: I feel overwhelmed by work responsibilities and I find it hard to relax after work. The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) developed by Wong and Law (2002) was used to measure the leader emotional intelligence. The construct comprised 16 items (EI1–EI16) which were an assessment of employees' perceptions of their leaders' emotional awareness, empathy, emotional regulation and interpersonal skills. Some items in the sample were: "My supervisor understands my feelings" and "My supervisor deals well with conflict." The items adapted from Mobley (1977) and Allen and Meyer (1990) were used to measure intentions to retain employees. The construct was comprised of 3 items (ERI1 to ERI3) which explored employees' desire to stay in their existing institution. The items on which they were asked to sample were: "I will stay at this organization in the future" and "I am not likely to leave this university next year."

#### Data Analysis

##### Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic data for the respondents is important to background into understanding faculty perception of pay transparency, living wage demands, occupational stress, leader emotional intelligence and employee retention intentions. The results indicate that there was no significant difference between the number of male and female respondents, each making up 50% of the sample. This fair balance reduces gender bias and increases the generalizability of results to include male and female faculty members. On marital status, majority of respondents were married (57.1%) and 42.9% were single. This suggests a family and financial obligation among many respondents which could significantly affect their opinions on salary, job security and whether they would stay.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	63	50.0
	Female	64	50.0
Marital Status	Married	73	57.1
	Single	54	42.9
Age Group	20-29 Years	32	25.0
	30-39 Years	67	53.6
	40-49 Years	14	10.7
	50-59 Years	14	10.7
Education Level	Bachelor Degree	5	3.6
	Master's Degree	68	53.6
	MPhil / PhD	54	42.9
Experience	02-10 Years	85	67.9
	11-20 Years	32	25.0
	21-30 Years	5	3.6
	31-40 Years	5	3.6
Occupation Level	Lecturer	104	82.1
	Assistant Professor	23	17.9
<b>Total Respondents</b>		127	100

The age distribution showed that most of the respondents (53.6%) were in the age range 30-39 years followed by 25% in the age range 20-29 years. Less than 10% of people were in the age range 40 to 49 years and 50 to 59 years. The overall statistics suggest that the majority of respondents were young and mid-career faculty, who are likely to be more concerned about career growth, fair compensation and leadership. In terms of educational qualification, the majority of respondents had higher academic qualification with 53.6% of them having Master's degrees, 42.9% of them MPhil and PhD degrees respectively with only 3.6% holding Bachelor's degrees. This indicates that respondents had a high level of

qualification and they were able to critically analyse organizational policies for compensation practices and leadership behaviour.

The responses also reflect professional attributes of the respondents through their experience and occupational distribution. Most faculty members (67.9%) worked between 02-10 years and 25% of faculty members had 11-20 years experience. Fewer than one-quarter of these had 20 years or more of experience. This indicates that the survey findings are largely representative of the views of early and mid-career faculty, who may be more concerned about job security, promotion, workload, and financial security. With respect to level of

occupation the majority of the sample were lecturers (82.1%) while assistant professors accounted for 17.9%. Lecturers are generally required to provide higher level of teaching responsibilities and have less decision-making power than the senior faculty members; thus, their attitudes towards pay transparency, living wage, occupational stress and emotionally intelligent leadership are of great importance for the understanding of employee retention intentions in private universities of Hyderabad.

#### The measures of central tendency and dispersion.

The basic descriptive statistical tools of central tendency and dispersion applied to summarize the data form the basis of giving a general picture of the perception of respondents. Measures of central tendency (This includes the mean, median and mode) are used to show the average response pattern in a set of data, while measures of dispersion (This includes the

standard deviation) are used to show the amount of variation in responses (Fisher et al., 2009; Mishra et al., 2019). All of the above statistics provide an overall picture of the respondents perception of the constructs being studied and the uniformity of the perceptions, if they are the same throughout the sample. The measures of central tendency and dispersion for all major constructs measured in the present study are all the same: those that make up Pay Transparency, namely Living Wage Demands, Occupational Stress, Leader Emotional Intelligence, and Employee Retention Intentions. In addition, Cronbachs Alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency reliability for each construct, along with the mean and standard deviation. The statistics will provide a description of perceptions within the faculty and also an evaluation of the reliability of the scale prior to structural equation modeling.

**Table 2. Central Tendencies, Dispersion, and Internal Consistency of Constructs**

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pay Transparency	0.881	3.94	1.08
Living Wage Demands	0.864	4.12	1.15
Occupational Stress	0.852	3.78	1.20
Leader Emotional Intelligence	0.893	4.05	1.07
Employee Retention Intentions	0.876	3.89	1.13

The average scores show that the respondents have a tendency to agree with all the constructs moderately to fairly high. The highest mean score of Living Wage Demands ( $M = 4.12$ ) indicated that the importance of the proper compensation according to the living standards is high among the members of the faculty. The mean of Leader Emotional Intelligence is also high ( $M = 4.05$ ) which means that respondents tend to view their academic leaders as emotionally responsible and accommodative. Pay Transparency ( $M = 3.94$ ) and Employee Retention Intentions ( $M = 3.89$ ) are moderately

positive with perceptions and indicate that faculty members are aware of transparency initiatives and demonstrate retention inclinations, but the institution can do better. Occupational Stress registered the least mean ( $M = 3.78$ ) which means a moderate occurrence of stress in the academic work environment. The analysis of the standard deviation is between 1.07 and 1.20, which has a moderate variation of responses. It indicates that overall perceptions are in a relatively consistent state, although faculty members may have certain differences, which could be explained by

different workload, culture of the department, or leadership practices. Cronbachs Alpha of all constructs are above the recommended value of 0.70 which attests satisfactory internal consistency reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Leader Emotional Intelligence ( $\alpha = 0.893$ ) showed the greatest reliability which means that choice items of this measurement are coherent. In general, these descriptive findings substantiate the fact that the constructs are both reliable and stable enough to continue with measurement model and structural model evaluation with the help of SmartPLS.

**Evaluation of Measurement Model using Algorithms Analysis.**

Measurement model evaluation is an important process in structural equation modeling because it can be used to ascertain that latent constructs are reliably and validly measured before structural relationships are tested (Williams et al., 2008). Outer loading estimates of indicators and path coefficients between constructs are estimated using the PLS algorithm in SmartPLS. This is done to assess the level of representativeness of observed variables with their theoretical constructs (Hair et al., 2020).

The measurement model was evaluated in the current study through measuring the reliability of the indicators, the internal consistency

reliability, the convergent validity, and the discriminant validity. The evaluation of the indicator reliability was by use of outer loadings, with a value of above 0.70 acceptable. Cronbachs Alpha and Composite Reliability were used to determine internal consistency reliability that had a value of more than the recommended 0.70. The convergent validity was also checked using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the constructs were found to have at least 50 percent of their indicators explained. Fonnell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio were used to measure discriminant validity to ensure that constructs were different empirically between each other. Constructs that were measured in this study were Pay Transparency, Living Wage Demands, Occupational Stress, Leader Emotional Intelligence, and Employee Retention Intentions. The obtained algorithm results were satisfactory outer loadings, good reliability coefficients and good convergent and discriminant validity of all constructs. These results demonstrate that the measurement scales applied in the study capture respectively their theoretical constructs in a manner acceptable to test the structural models.

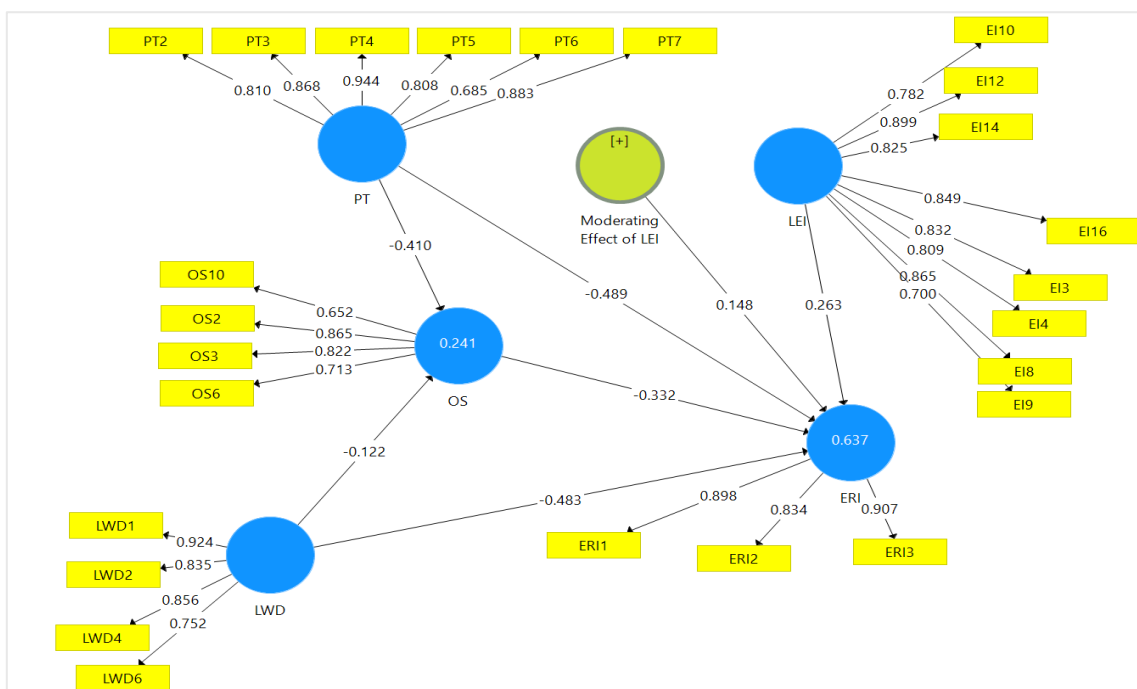


Figure 2. Measurement Model of the Study

The successful validation of the measurement model gives the confidence that the resulting structural relationships are not inflated by the error of measurement. It provides a strong empirical basis of testing hypothesized direct, mediating, and moderating effects of the proposed conceptual framework. The research then goes on to structural model testing with considerable confidence on the construct validation and reliability.

**Outer Loadings (Factor Analysis)**

Outer loading evaluation is one of the essential steps in measuring the indicator reliability of

the measurement model. Outer loadings will show how much each observed indicator is related to its latent construct. Hair et al. (2016) suggest that a loading of over 0.70 is satisfactory because it indicates that the construct has at least 50% of the variance in the indicator. In the given research, the outer loadings were investigated in relation to Pay Transparency (PT), Living Wage Demands (LWD), Occupational Stress (OS), Leader Emotional Intelligence (LEI), Employee Retention Intentions (ERI), and the interaction term of the moderating effect (OS × LEI).

**Table 3. Outer Loadings (Measurement Model Assessment)**

Indicators	ERI	LEI	LWD	OS	PT
ERI1	0.898				
ERI2	0.834				
ERI3	0.907				
EI3		0.832			
EI4		0.809			
EI8		0.865			
EI9		0.700			
EI10		0.782			
EI12		0.899			
EI14		0.825			
EI16		0.849			
LWD1			0.924		
LWD2			0.835		
LWD4			0.856		
LWD6			0.752		
OS2				0.865	

OS3				0.822	
OS6				0.713	
OS10				0.652	
PT2					0.810
PT3					0.868
PT4					0.944
PT5					0.808
PT6					0.685
PT7					0.883

The findings reveal that most indicators are strong loadings in their respective constructs which is above the recommended range of 0.70. The range of the Employee Retention Intentions (ERI) items is 0.834 to 0.907, which indicates a high reliability of the indicator. The satisfactory loadings of the Leader Emotional Intelligence (LEI) indicators are also satisfactory with a range of 0.700 to 0.899, which indicates that the items have a reliable measure of leadership emotional competence. The LWD indicators have high loading with the strongest loading being LWD1 (0.924) which demonstrates a high representation of the wage adequacy perceptions. Occupational Stress (OS) and Pay Transparency (PT) indicate an acceptable loading of occupation, but OS10 (0.652) and PT6 (0.685) are slightly smaller than the ideal of 0.70 index but are not objectionable in social science research. The moderating effect loading values 1.022; this is acceptable in PLS-SEM when the product indicator approach is employed. In general, the obtained outcomes of the outer loading confirm the satisfactory reliability of the

indicators and allow confirming the sufficiency of the measurement model to continue the validation procedure and test the structural model.

#### *Construct Reliability and Validity*

A key measurement model evaluation step in PLS-SEM is evaluating construct reliability and validity. Reliability guarantees that the indicators always measure what they are supposed to measure and the validity checks that the constructs are the true depictions of the theoretical concepts they are supposed to measure. Internal consistency reliability was checked in this study through Cronbachs Alpha, rho A and Composite Reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used to measure convergent validity. Based on the given guidelines (Hair et al., 2016), Cronbach Alpha, rho A and Composite Reliability values should be higher than 0.70, whereas the AVE should be higher than 0.50 to ensure a sufficient degree of convergent validity.

**Table 4. Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity**

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
ERI (Employee Retention Intentions)	0.856	0.875	0.912	0.775
LEI (Leader Emotional Intelligence)	0.933	0.970	0.943	0.676
LWD (Living Wage Demands)	0.866	0.886	0.908	0.713

OS (Occupational Stress)	0.773	0.842	0.850	0.589
PT (Pay Transparency)	0.913	0.932	0.933	0.700

The findings reveal that each of the constructs has good internal consistency reliability. The Alpha values of Cronbach lie between 0.773 (Occupational Stress) and 0.933 (Leader Emotional Intelligence) which is more than the suggested value of 0.70. On the same note, all the rho A values exceed 0.80 which once again affirms construct reliability. The values of Composite Reliability are between 0.850 and 0.943, which imply high reliability of the measurement scales in general. The convergent validity is also determined because all the AVE values are greater than the required minimum of 0.50. The AVE of Employee Retention Intentions is the highest (0.775), which implies that a significant share of the variance in its indicators is covered by the construct. All in all, the results indicate that the measurement model has a sufficient level of reliability and convergent validity, which will form an effective

basis on which to base the further evaluation of the structural model.

**Discriminant Validity Assessment**

Discriminant validity evaluates how an empirical construct is different in a model with other constructs. It makes sure that other variables are able to represent the phenomena that other variables are not able to report in the structural model. One of the most popular techniques of measuring discriminant validity in PLS-SEM is the Fornell Larcker criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Based on this criterion, square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct must be at a higher value than the correlation it has with other constructs. This shows that a construct has more variance with its indicators as compared to other constructs in the model.

**Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Criterion for Discriminant Validity**

Construct	ERI	LEI	LWD	OS × LEI	OS	PT
ERI	<b>0.880</b>					
LEI	0.291	<b>0.822</b>				
LWD	-0.511	0.240	<b>0.844</b>			
OS × LEI	0.105	0.211	0.308	<b>1.000</b>		
OS	-0.085	-0.345	-0.359	-0.303	<b>0.768</b>	
PT	-0.533	0.041	0.576	0.276	-0.481	<b>0.837</b>

Note: Diagonal values (bold) represent the square root of AVE.

The findings show that AVE square root of each construct (as shown on the diagonal in bold) is higher than inter construct correlations. As an example, Employee Retention Intentions (0.880) is higher than its correlation with Leader Emotional intelligence (0.291), Living Wage Demands (-0.511), Occupational Stress (-0.085), Pay Transparency (-0.533) and interaction term (0.105). Equally,

Pay Transparency (0.837), Living Wage Demands (0.844), and Leader Emotional Intelligence (0.822) each have higher relationships with their indicators than any others. Occupational Stress also meets the criterion with a square root of AVE of 0.768 as compared to its correlations with other

variables. The interaction construct (OS × LEI) has a value of 1.000 on the diagonal as expected of interaction terms developed using product indicator techniques in PLS-SEM. All in all, Fornell-Larcker findings prove that the discriminant validity is sufficiently determined. All the constructs are empirically different and they measure different theoretical concepts in the model. This goes in favor of the structural integrity of the measurement model and enables the study to go ahead in the process of testing hypotheses and structural path.

#### Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Besides FornellLarcker criterion, discriminant validity was also determined on the basis of

HeterotraitMonotrait Ratio (HTMT). The approach of using HTMT is also viewed as a more rigorous and credible methodological approach to assessing discriminant validity in the variance-based structural equation modeling (Henseler et al., 2015). The HTMT ratio is a measure of construct similarity, which involves ratio between the correlations among constructs to the correlations within constructs. As suggested, a low value of HTMT to ensure a satisfactory level of discriminant validity is below 0.90 and ideally, below 0.85 in more conservative tests.

**Table 6. Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Matrix**

Construct	ERI	LEI	LWD	OS × LEI	OS	PT
ERI	–					
LEI	0.284	–				
LWD	0.581	0.403	–			
OS × LEI	0.115	0.280	0.322	–		
OS	0.155	0.528	0.437	0.336	–	
PT	0.569	0.235	0.620	0.277	0.540	–

All the values of HTMT in the table are less than the recommended value of 0.90 thus affirming the existence of satisfactory discriminant validity among the constructs. The maximum value of HTMT is between Pay Transparency (PT) and Living Wage Demands (LWD) of 0.620 which is within acceptable levels. In the same way there is a moderate association between the variables of Occupational Stress (OS) and Leader Emotional Intelligence (LEI) where the value between the two is 0.528, though not overly overlapped. The interaction construct (OS × LEI) also exhibits low values of HTMT with other variables, which proves that it is statistically different in its constructs. On the whole, the HTMT findings give solid grounds to believe that every construct of the model

corresponds to a specific theoretical concept. Combined with the FornellLarcker criterion, the results prove the fact that discriminant validity is well established. This makes the measurement model more credible and makes further steps of structural model evaluation and hypothesis testing.

#### Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Results.

The structural model was evaluated in Smart PLS using bootstrapping techniques (5000 resamples) after determining the adequacy of the measurement model to test the significance, strength, and direction of the hypothesized relationships. Path coefficients ( $\beta$ ), t-values, and p-values were calculated to establish whether the proposed hypotheses were accepted. As it is stated in Hair et al. (2016), it

is a statistically significant relationship when the t-value is greater than 1.96 at the level of

significance of 5 percent ( $p < 0.05$ ). The SEM analysis findings are shown below.

**Table 7. Structural Model Results: Path Coefficients and Significance Testing**

Path Relationship	Original Sample ( $\beta$ )	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values
LEI $\rightarrow$ ERI	0.263	0.272	0.066	3.996	0.000
LWD $\rightarrow$ ERI	-0.483	-0.491	0.063	7.642	0.000
LWD $\rightarrow$ OS	-0.122	-0.131	0.156	0.784	0.433
OS $\times$ LEI $\rightarrow$ ERI	0.148	0.143	0.065	2.255	0.025
OS $\rightarrow$ ERI	-0.332	-0.322	0.086	3.879	0.000
PT $\rightarrow$ ERI	-0.489	-0.473	0.072	6.752	0.000
PT $\rightarrow$ OS	-0.410	-0.408	0.139	2.961	0.003
LWD $\rightarrow$ OD $\rightarrow$ ERI	0.041	0.047	0.054	0.757	0.449
PT $\rightarrow$ OD $\rightarrow$ ERI	0.136	0.130	0.052	2.596	0.010

According to the results of the SEM, it is possible to find some statistically significant relationships in the model. Leader Emotional Intelligence (LEI) has a positive but significant influence on Employee Retention Intentions (ERI) ( $\beta = 0.263$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), which suggests that the emotionally intelligent leadership leads to the promotion of faculty retention intentions in private universities. Living Wage Demands (LWD) have a negative and significant impact on ERI ( $\beta = -0.483$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), indicating that unfulfilled wage expectations have a strong negative effect on reducing the intention of employees to stay. Likewise, Occupational Stress (OS) has a negative influence on ERI ( $\beta = -0.332$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), which proves that the increased levels of stress reduce retention intentions. Pay Transparency (PT) also shows that there is a very negative direct correlation with ERI ( $\beta = -0.489$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and so the perception of pay communication and fairness has a strong impact on the retention process. Moreover, PT has a significant negative impact on Occupational Stress ( $\beta = -0.410$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), which indicates that it indirectly affects retention through the mechanism of reducing stress.

In the last two paths, the outcomes demonstrate varying degrees of significance in the indirect relationships. Living Wage Demands has an indirect impact on Employee Retention Intentions via Occupational Stress (LWD  $\rightarrow$

OS  $\rightarrow$  ERI) and this effect is statistically insignificant ( $\beta = 0.041$ ,  $p = 0.449$ ). This implies that occupational stress is not a significant mediator of the relationship between living wage demands and retention intentions, so the effect of wage issues on retention is more of a direct than a mediating effect. Conversely, the positive and statistically significant  $\beta$  between Pay Transparency and Employee Retention Intentions via Occupational Stress (PT  $\rightarrow$  OS  $\rightarrow$  ERI) is positive ( $\beta = 0.136$ ,  $p = 0.010$ ). The implication of this finding is that the mediating role of occupational stress is significant, with pay transparency decreasing the stress levels and, consequently, improving employee retention intention.

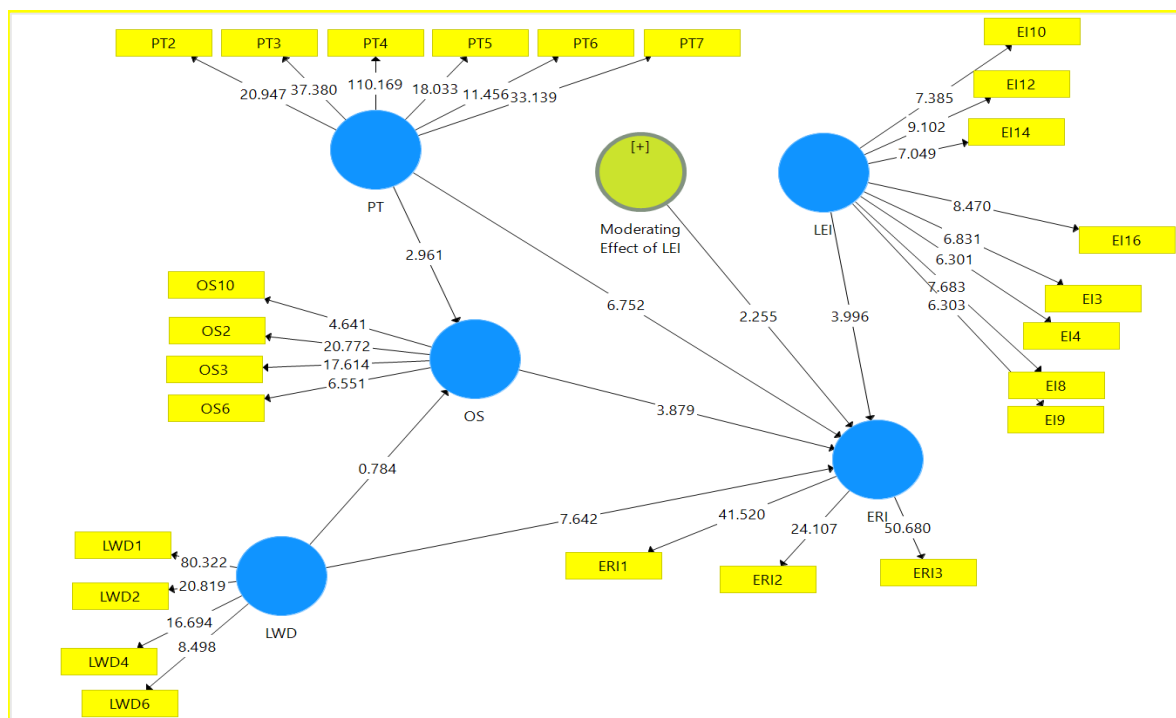


Figure 3 Bootstrapped SEM Model

Nevertheless, Living Wage Demands have a direct impact on Occupational Stress ( $\beta = 0.122 = P= 0.433$ ), which is not statistically significant, which means that wage issues do not directly relate to the level of stress in the sampled institutions. Notably, the moderating influence of Leader Emotional Intelligence on the correlation between Occupational Stress and ERI is significant and positive ( $\beta = 0.148, p = 0.025$ ), which indicates that emotionally intelligent leadership has a protective effect on the negative effect of stress on retention intentions. On the whole, the SEM results are highly empirical evidence that supports the proposed structural relationships in this research and specifies that factors related to compensation and leadership emotional intelligence are vital when determining

employee retention in private universities of Hyderabad.

**Structural Model Assessment: Effect Size ( $f^2$ ) and Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )**

After having validated and assessed the measurement models in terms of validity and reliability, the structural model was assessed to identify the strength of the explanations offered by the hypothesized relationships and the sizes of the effect. The coefficient of determination

( $R^2$ ) is used to estimate the share of variance of the endogenous constructs which is explained by the exogenous variables. Hair et al. (2016) state that  $R^2$  values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 may be weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively.

Table 7. Structural Model Results: Effect Size ( $f^2$ ) and Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

A) Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

Endogenous Construct	$R^2$	Adjusted $R^2$
ERI (Employee Retention Intentions)	0.637	0.622
OS (Occupational Stress)	0.241	0.229

According to the R<sup>2</sup> outcomes, the model accounts 63.7 percent of the variance in the Employee Retention Intentions (ERI) which is arguably a considerable amount of explanatory power. This implies that the predictive power of Pay Transparency, Living Wage Demands, Occupational Stress, Leader Emotional Intelligence and interaction term are strong predictors of faculty retention intentions. In the case of Occupational Stress (OS), the R<sup>2</sup> = 0.241, which implies that the compensation related variables explain between 24 and 25 percent of the variance in the level of stress. The f<sup>2</sup> effect size also explains more about the contribution made by each predictor. The effect of Living Wage Demands (0.391) and Pay

Transparency (0.356) shows that the influence of compensation-related factors on Employee Retention Intentions is predominant. Occupational Stress (0.197) has a mediating effect of medium effect on retention whereas Leader Emotional Intelligence (0.152) has an intermediate effect. There is a small-to-moderate effect of moderating effect (OS × LEI) (0.126), indicating that emotionally intelligent leadership partially corrects the effect of stress on retention intentions. Pay Transparency has a medium impact on Occupational Stress (0.148), but the impact of Living Wage Demands on Occupational Stress is very low (0.013).

**B) Effect Size (f<sup>2</sup>)**

Predictor → Outcome	ERI	OS
LEI → ERI	0.152	—
LWD → ERI	0.391	—
PT → ERI	0.356	—
OS → ERI	0.197	—
OS × LEI → ERI	0.126	—
LWD → OS	—	0.013
PT → OS	—	0.148

Moreover, the effect size (f<sup>2</sup>) was also tested to understand the contribution of each exogenous construct individually to the value of R<sup>2</sup> of the endogenous variable. The f<sup>2</sup> of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 show small, medium and large effect, respectively. On balance, these results indicate that the most prominent predictors of retention intentions are compensation transparency and wage adequacy, and leadership emotional intelligence and stress dynamics are important but rather moderate factors as part of the structural model.

**Discussion**

The results of this research indicate that leadership emotional intelligence plays a very crucial role in determining employee retention intentions in institutions of higher learning. According to the SEM findings, it was observed that leader emotional intelligence has a positive effect on employee retention intentions and moderates the connection between occupational stress and employee retention. It implies that emotionally intelligent leaders can regulate employee emotions more, offer them support, and maintain a psychologically safe working environment that minimizes the harmful consequences of stress. The results can

be compared to the previous studies that prove the positive effects of emotional intelligence on workplace attitudes, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization (Miao et al., 2016; Wong and Law, 2002). In the same way, the article by Memon, et al. (2022) in Sukkur, Sindh, also established that emotional intelligence is an intermediate in how occupational stress and intentions to leave a job can be reduced among teaching faculty. The moderating effect found in this study contributes further to the argument that, emotionally intelligent leadership may buffer the adverse impacts of stressful working environments therefore encouraging employees to be committed to their institutions.

The findings also indicate that occupational stress is a big negative factor in the intentions of employees to leave. The observation is in line with theoretical lenses of turn over intention as presented by Mobley (1977) which opines that job stress and dissatisfaction tend to make employees contemplate leaving their organizations. The academic workload, pressure in research, and administration may be the cause of stress among faculty staff members in the context of higher education institutions in Pakistan. Similar findings have been made by previous research stating that work overload and job stress were found to have a strong effect on the intentions to turnover within the higher education sector (Nisar et al., 2021; Hakro et al., 2022). The current research, however, did not establish that living wage demands had a significant impact on occupational stress and one can conclude that financial expectations do not necessarily result in psychological stress in academic staff. Rather, it is possible that stress is more closely related to institutional conditions, including workload, organizational support and leadership practices. This means that universities need to work on the betterment of the working conditions and leadership support systems to minimize stress and improve faculty retention.

The other significant research finding of this work is associated with the effect of the compensation-related variables, namely, pay transparency and living wage demands, on the intention to retain an employee. Both variables have a significant effect on the retention

intentions, which is shown by the results and proves the relevance of the fair compensation policy in academic institutions. Past studies indicate that open pay communication does encourage the development of perceptions of fairness, trust, and organizational justice, which eventually enhance employee commitment and decrease turnover intentions (Colella et al., 2007; Day, 2011). In a similar study, Stofberg et al. (2022) concluded that pay transparency was critical in determining the attitude of employees toward organizations and their intentions to stay employed. Moreover, the rise of living wage expectations under the influence of inflationary forces and the fluctuation of the economy has only heightened the anxiety of the employees in terms of fair pay (Kibria et al., 2024; Asad et al., 2024). Also reports made by the organizations like the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2025) and corporate campaigns like the living wage policy of Unilever Pakistan also underline the increasing significance of proper wages in maintaining the stability of the workforce. Thus, the result of this study implies that universities need to implement transparent and fair remuneration systems and take into consideration the issue of living wages to ensure the satisfaction of employees and high retention rates in the long term.

### Recommendations

To foster trust, fairness, and employee retention, private universities in Hyderabad must establish clear and fair compensation policies and communicate them to faculty members. Wage policies at universities must also be regularly reviewed to ensure that professors are paid enough to be able to afford the increased cost of living and financial requirements. Further, stress management training, workload balancing and counselling support should be introduced in institutions to manage and minimise occupational stress faced by faculty members. Academic leaders and department heads should also have emotional intelligence, leadership communication, empathy and conflict management training organized to foster a positive workplace environment and boost employee engagement and retention plans.

### Implications

This study has important theoretical implications as it extends the application of Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory and Social Exchange Theory (SET) in the domain of Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan. The results show that pay transparency and living wage demands are significant organizational resources that affect the intentions to stay directly and indirectly in the way of occupational stress. In addition, the study adds to the literature by incorporating the mediation of occupational stress and the moderation of leader emotional intelligence in a single model. The integrated model provides a more comprehensive explanation of the relationship between compensation fairness and leadership behavior on faculty retention in private universities.

The study also provides valuable insights for university administrators, policymakers, and HR professionals. The results highlight the importance of having clear compensation models, just treatment, and emotionally intelligent management for enhancing faculty satisfaction and retention. Universities that provide supportive leadership and work practices and emphasize reduction strategies are more likely to foster positive work environments that foster organizational commitment and decrease turnover intentions. Moreover, the study emphasizes the need to form policies for Human Resources which should focus on the psychological, fair and healthy well being of the employees so that this could help maintain stability and sustainable academic performance in the Higher Education Sector of Pakistan.

### The future directions and limitations

This study has some limitations that offer potential for future studies. First, the study only included the private universities in Hyderabad which could limit the generalizability of the results to other cities or the public universities in Pakistan. Secondly, the study was of a cross sectional research design as it only had one time snapshot of the respondents perceptions and did not investigate change over time. Thirdly, purposive sampling and self-reported questionnaires could lead to response bias.

Longitudinal studies, larger samples and probability sampling would further enhance the generalizability and accuracy of future studies. Other factors like organizational culture, job satisfaction, career growth and work-life balance may also be explored in the study to understand the intentions of employees to stay on in higher education institutions.

### Conclusion

The present study found the effect of pay transparency, living wage demands on employee retention intention among faculty members of private universities at Hyderabad with occupational stress as a mediating variable and emotional intelligence of the leaders as moderating variable. It found that clear compensation models and a living wage are beneficial to employee retention because they have an impact on employee perceptions of fairness, financial security and organizational support. It also revealed that occupational stress is a significant mediator of these relationships, suggesting that when compensation practices are inadequate, they create stress and have a negative impact on employee commitment and retention. In addition, it was discovered that leader emotional intelligence buffered the detrimental effect of occupational stress on employee withdrawal intentions by fostering a positive and supportive work context.

The study has found that besides monetary incentives, psychological and leadership factors also play a role in determining the retention rate of employees in private universities. Organizations that support fair compensation, minimize workplace stress, and foster emotionally intelligent leadership are more likely to keep qualified faculty members and have stability in the organization. The results add value to the body of knowledge in the field of Organizational behavior, Human resource management and Higher education management in Pakistan and provide practical suggestions for developing faculty retention policies. The research findings underscore the significance of considering compensation equity, staff welfare, and positive leadership behaviors as essential components of achieving enduring and productive school cultures.

## REFERENCES

- Abdul Wahab Memon, A., Kanhar, N. A., Imran, M., & Aureejo, A. H. (2022). A study of occupational stress and turnover intention mediated by emotional intelligence: An empirical study of public and private teaching faculty of Sukkur Region colleges, Sindh, Pakistan. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(1), 8829. <https://www.tojqi.net/index.php/journal/article/view/8829>
- Abdul Wahab Memon, A., Kanhar, N. A., Imran, M., & Aureejo, A. H. (2022). A study of occupational stress and turnover intention mediated by emotional intelligence: An empirical study of public and private teaching faculty of Sukkur Region colleges, Sindh, Pakistan. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(1), 8829. <https://www.tojqi.net/index.php/journal/article/view/8829>
- Adams, J. S. (1965). *Inequity in social exchange*. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 267-299). Academic Press.
- Akhtar, S., Malik, M. F., & Awan, Z. R. (2021). Examining supervisor support through the lens of conservation of resource theory (COR): A sequential path model. *Research Journal of Social Sciences and Economics Review*, 2(2), 9-18.
- Alam, F., Yang, Q., Rüteliöné, A., & Bhutto, M. Y. (2023, May). Virtual leadership and nurses' psychological stress during COVID-19 in the tertiary hospitals of Pakistan: The role of emotional intelligence. In *Healthcare* (Vol. 11, No. 11, p. 1537). MDPI.
- Ali, D., Saleem, E., Khanum, H., Siddiqui, S., Azhaar, M., & Kanwal, F. (2023). Resilience and Emotional Intelligence among Students in Karachi, Pakistan: A Comparative Study. *Pakistan Journal of Applied Psychology (PJAP)*, 3(1), 243-253. <https://doi.org/10.52461/pjap.v3i1.1310>
- Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 63(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1990.tb00506.x>
- Altassan, H., & Rahman, M. (2023). Organizational culture and employee retention in higher education: Evidence from developing countries. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 61(2), 215-234.
- Amin, M. (2022). Fixing minimum wage in Pakistan: Comparative analysis of the ILO Convention No. 131 and the Islamic principles of Adal and Ihsan. *Manchester Journal of Transnational Islamic Law & Practice*, 18(1).
- Ansari, A. N., & Asad, M. M. (2023). Emotional intelligence and leadership styles: A case study of school heads in Pakistan. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1-19.
- Asad, S., Malik, N., & Malik, S. Y. (2024). Socio Socio-Economic Impact of Wage Inequality on Employee's Satisfaction. *Administrative and Management Sciences Journal*, 3(1), 107-118. [https://doi.org/10.59365/amsj.3\(1\).2024.124](https://doi.org/10.59365/amsj.3(1).2024.124)
- Ashraf, F., & Khan, M. A. (2022). A study of job insecurity and turnover intentions among bullied employees in Pakistan - does psychological capital ameliorate? *Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 10(2), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.52015/jrss.10i2.187>
- Asrar-ul-Haq, M., Anwar, S., & Nasir, S. (2025). Organizational politics and faculty turnover intentions in Pakistani universities. *Asian Journal of Management Research*, 15(1), 45-61.
- Bagum, M., Akram, M., Abbas, A., & Hussain, R. (2023). Role of Emotional Intelligence in Students' Learning at Secondary Level. *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 11(4), 4771-4781. <https://doi.org/10.52131/pjhss.2023.v11i4.2017>

- Baka, Ł. (2020). Types of stressors and job burnout: The moderating role of emotional intelligence. *Current Psychology*, 39(4), 1225–1236. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9827-9>
- Bamberger, P. (2023). Pay transparency and employee outcomes: Equity, motivation, and trust. *Human Resource Management Review*, 33(1), 100862.
- Batool, A., Ahmed, S., Naveed, S., Bilal, M. A., Khan, M. A., & Nawaz, S. (2024). The effect of leadership qualities on organizational commitment among bureaucrats; Emotional intelligence as a moderator. *Migration Letters*, 21(S6), 146–160.
- Begum, A. (2022). Employment generation challenges and strategies for Pakistan: A diagnostic analysis. *Unisia*, 40(1), 67–102.
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: Wiley.
- Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24(4), 385–396. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2136404>
- Colella, A., Paetzold, R. L., Zardkoohi, A., & Wesson, M. J. (2007). Exposing pay secrecy. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(1), 55–71. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.23463701>
- Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16(3), 297–334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02310555>
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 874–900.
- Dawani, K., & Sayeed, A. (2024). *Living wage in Pakistan: Estimates, adoption and policy challenges*. Anker Research Institute.
- Day, N. E. (2011). Perceived pay communication, justice, and pay satisfaction. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 21(3), 331–346. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-8583.2010.00152.x>
- El Mountasser, R., & Sahraoui, H. (2025). Determinants of faculty retention in private higher education: Evidence from Morocco. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 39(1), 89–104.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Fareed, M. Z., Su, Q., & Awan, A. A. (2021). The effect of emotional intelligence, intellectual intelligence and transformational leadership on project success: An empirical study of public projects of Pakistan. *Project Leadership and Society*, 2, 100036.
- Field, A. (2018). *Applied statistical techniques for behavioral sciences*. *Advances in Quantitative Psychology*, 5(2), 67–89. <https://doi.org/10.7745/aqp.2018.052067>
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800104>
- Habibi, M. (2023). Compensation practices and employee perceptions in developing countries: The role of transparency. *Journal of Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, 42(2), 21–32.
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Danks, N. P., & Ray, S. (2022). *Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using R: A workbook*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-89041-2>
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C., & Sarstedt, M. (2019). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

- Hakro, T. H., Jhatial, A. A., & Chandio, J. A. (2022). Employee turnover intentions: Investigating the role of work overload, job satisfaction, employee engagement and job stress. *Research Journal of Social Sciences and Economics Review*, 3(2), 71–82. [https://doi.org/10.36902/rjsser-vol3-iss2-2022\(71-82\)](https://doi.org/10.36902/rjsser-vol3-iss2-2022(71-82))
- Haque, A. U., & Yamoah, F. A. (2021). The role of ethical leadership in managing occupational stress to promote innovative work behaviour: A cross-cultural management perspective. *Sustainability*, 13(17), 9608.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(1), 115–135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8>
- Hobfoll, S. E. (2021). *Conservation of resources theory: Its implications for stress, health, and resilience*. Springer.
- Howell, K. H., Kuperminc, G. P., & Rose, R. A. (2019). A randomized trial of a living wage intervention for working parents: Effects on family economic well-being, parenting, and child development. *Child Development*, 90(3), 761–774. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12994>
- Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). (2025, June 18). *HRCP demands living wage for workers*. HRCP. <https://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/hrcp-demands-living-wage-for-workers/>
- Hyder, S., Malik, M. I., Hussain, S., & Saqib, A. (2025). A social exchange theory perspective on efficacy, co-creation and successful new service development. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 12(3), 774–787.
- Iqbal, I. A., Munawar, N., Imran, A., & Fatima, N. (2024). Establishing Employee Commitment: Respect or Pay? *Journal of Management Studies and Development*, 3(1), Article 459. <https://doi.org/10.56741/jmsd.v3i01.459>
- Iqbal, I. A., Munawar, N., Imran, A., & Fatima, N. (2024). Establishing Employee Commitment: Respect or Pay? *Journal of Management Studies and Development*, 3(1), Article 459. <https://doi.org/10.56741/jmsd.v3i01.459>
- Irfan, S., Rasool, H., & Policy, M. P. (2023). *PIDE School of Social Sciences Pakistan Institutes of Development Economics*. Pakistan Institutes of Development Economics: Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Javed, M. F., Jadoon, A. K., Malik, A., Sarwar, A., Ahmed, M., & Liaqat, S. (2022). Gender wage disparity and economic prosperity in Pakistan. *Cogent Economics & Finance*, 10(1), 2067021.
- Javeria Rehman, & Syed Imran Mehmood. (2024). Association between Emotional Intelligence and Professionalism in Medical Students: The Compassion-Competence Nexus. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences*, 41(1), 136–140. <https://doi.org/10.12669/pjms.41.1.9748>
- Javeria Rehman, & Syed Imran Mehmood. (2024). Association between Emotional Intelligence and Professionalism in Medical Students: The Compassion-Competence Nexus. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences*, 41(1), 136–140. <https://doi.org/10.12669/pjms.41.1.9748>
- Jehan, R., & Nawaz, F. (2023). Faculty work-life balance and compensation in Pakistani universities. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 43(1), 101–118.
- Khan, A., Baloch, N., & Iqbal, S. (2024). Using SmartPLS for behavioral and management research. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Quantitative Studies*, 11(1), 45–60. <https://doi.org/10.9000/apjqs.2024.111045>
- Khan, S., Ali, M., & Qureshi, R. (2024). Compensation practices and faculty retention: Insights from private universities in Pakistan. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12(3), 56–72.

- Khan, T. M., Tahir, H., Salman, M., Mustafa, Z. U., Raza, M. H., Asif, N., ... & Baig, M. R. (2021). General anxiety predictors among frontline warriors of COVID: Cross-sectional study among nursing staff in Punjab, Pakistan. *Archives of Pharmacy Practice, 12*(2-2021), 40-44.
- Kibria, A., Mir Alam, A., & Siddiqui, M. B. (2024). How pay transparency and living wage demands impacts on employee work ethics under inflation pressures. *Bulletin of Management Review, 1*(4), 263-282.
- Kline, R. B. (2016). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (4th ed.). Guilford Press.
- Kuuyelleh, H., Alqahtani, A., & Akanpaadgi, S. (2022). Academic staff retention challenges in Ghanaian universities: Policy and practical implications. *International Journal of Educational Development, 87*, 102502.
- López-López, M. J., García-González, M., & Sánchez-Hernández, M. I. (2021). Occupational stress, burnout, and health in university teachers. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18*(24), 13102.
- Malik, A. I., & Akram, N. (2024). Determinants of the gender wage gap in Pakistan. *SN Business & Economics, 4*(2), 26.
- Malik, M. S., & Sattar, S. (2022). Unfolding the ramifications of workplace bullying: An empirical justification of conservation of resource theory in telecommunication sector of Pakistan. *Cogent Business & Management, 9*(1), 2038343.
- Mazhar, S., Khan, R., & Ali, T. (2021). Accuracy and relevance in primary data collection for social research. *Journal of Applied Research Methods, 14*(2), 55-72. <https://doi.org/10.7821/jarm.2021.14205>
- McPhee, C. (2020). Employee retention strategies in higher education institutions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 42*(5), 482-499.
- Miao, C., Humphrey, R. H., & Qian, S. (2016). A cross-cultural examination of the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 31*(2), 394-409. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-03-2015-0097>
- Miao, C., Humphrey, R. H., & Qian, S. (2016). A meta-analysis of emotional intelligence and work attitudes. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 89*(2), 191-221. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12124>
- Mobley, W. H. (1977). Intermediate linkages in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 62*(2), 237-240. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.62.2.237>
- Mobley, W. H. (1977). Intermediate linkages in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 62*(2), 237-240. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.62.2.237>
- Mubarak, S., Wahab, A., & Khan, M. (2012). Professional development and retention of faculty in Pakistani universities. *International Journal of Educational Management, 26*(2), 167-179.
- Munawar, S., Yousaf, H. Q., Ahmed, M., & Rehman, S. (2024). The impact of emotional intelligence, servant leadership, and psychological safety on employee's innovative behavior with the moderating effect of task interdependence in Lahore, Pakistan. *Current Psychology, 43*(9), 8186-8199.
- Munir, S., Shakeel, M., & Waheed, K. Z. (2023). The importance of emotional intelligence for transformational leaders: A critical analysis. *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 11*(1), 332-339.
- Nisar, M., Ihsan, A., & Hayat, K. (2021). Effect of workload and job stress on employee turnover intention: A case study of higher education sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. *Journal of Business & Tourism, 7*(1), 51-64. <https://doi.org/10.34260/jbt.v7i1.223>

- Nisar, M., Ihsan, A., & Hayat, K. (2021). Effect of workload and job stress on employee turnover intention: A case study of higher education sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. *Journal of Business & Tourism*, 7(1), 51–64. <https://doi.org/10.34260/jbt.v7i1.223>
- Pallant, J. (2020). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS* (7th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Payscale. (2023). *Payscale report finds pay transparency has the greatest impact on employee retention*. Payscale. <https://www.payscale.com/press-releases/2025-fair-pay-impact-report>
- Pfeiffer, T. (2024). Disclosure transparency in compensation reports: Institutional changes and firm responses in compensation reporting. *Journal of Business Economics*, 94(2), 125–148.
- Pulido-Martos, M., Cortés-Denia, D., & Pérez-Fuentes, M. C. (2024). The role of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence in team commitment. *Review of Managerial Science*, 18(1), 223–242.
- Quintanar, S. (2022). Full pay transparency and complex compensation systems. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 197, 1–16.
- Rasheed, R., Rashid, A., Amirah, N. A., & Afthanorhan, A. (2023). Quantifying the moderating effect of servant leadership between occupational stress and employee in-role and extra-role performance. *Unpublished manuscript*.
- Razzaqi, S., Shams, H. A., & Feroze, T. (2023). Job strain and turnover intentions: Evaluating impact of emotional exhaustion and perceived supervisor support in the construction industry of Pakistan. *ISSRA Papers*, 14(26), 1–17.
- Rehman, R., Tariq, S., & Tariq, S. (2022). Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance of Students. *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association*, 71(12). <https://doi.org/10.47391/JPMA.1779>
- Rehman, Z. U., Ziaullah, M., Mehmood, S., Buzdar, A. D., & Kashif, M. (2022). Exploring the relationship of workplace incivility, organizational commitment and turnover intention in the perspective of social exchange theory. *Indian Journal of Economics and Business*, 21(3), 189–202.
- Rind, Z. ul A., Arain, A. A., & Memon, J. (2023). Impact of Emotional Intelligence on the Research Stress: A Study of Gender Differences. *Pakistan Journal of Educational Research*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.52337/pjer.v6i2.787>
- Saeed, R. M. A., Zahra, F., Haq, A. U., & Malik, S. (2023). Impact of transformational leadership on project success with mediating role of trust and moderating role of leader's emotional intelligence: A case of project-based organization in Pakistan. *Journal of Business and Management Research*, 2(2), 767–788.
- Samad, A., Memon, S. B., & Maitlo, A. A. (2021). Workplace incivility and turnover intention among nurses of public healthcare system in Pakistan. *Independent Journal of Management & Production*, 12(5), 1394–1412.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). Ethical integrity in social science research methods. *Journal of Research Ethics and Governance*, 6(2), 89–107. <https://doi.org/10.7231/jreg.2019.062089>
- Searle, R. (2021). The living wage: A psychological perspective and research agenda. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 30(4), 497–510.
- Shah, A., Munir, S., & Zaheer, M. (2021). Occupational stress and job burnout of female medical staff: The moderating role of psychological capital and social support. *Journal of Management and Research*, 8(1), 212–249.
- Shaheen, F., Muzamil, M., & Shiraz, M. (2022). Cross-sectional survey research in higher education. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 11(3), 45–57. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v11n3p45>

- Shaheen, F., Qureshi, M., & Dar, L. (2023). *Advantages of structured questionnaires in higher education research*. *Review of Quantitative Social Science*, 7(4), 222–238. <https://doi.org/10.9921/rqss.2023.074222>
- Sharif, F., & Khan, M. K. (2023). The Public and Private Sector Pay Gap in Pakistan: A Quantile Regression Analysis. *The Pakistan Development Review*, 44(3), 271–306. <https://doi.org/10.30541/v44i3pp.271-306>
- Sharif, F., & Khan, M. K. (2023). The Public and Private Sector Pay Gap in Pakistan: A Quantile Regression Analysis. *The Pakistan Development Review*, 44(3), 271–306. <https://doi.org/10.30541/v44i3pp.271-306>
- Shen, P., & Slater, P. F. (2021). Occupational stress, coping strategies, health, and well-being among university academic staff: An integrative review. *International Education Studies*, 14(12), 99–124.
- Shen, Y. (2022). Pay transparency and wage inequality in higher education. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 40(3), 625–654.
- Siddiqui, S. (2023, May 4). Corporates advocate fair wages. *The Express Tribune*. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2415023/corporates-advocate-fair-wages>
- Stamati, K., & Willmott, L. (2023). *Evaluating employability skills and internship effectiveness among university graduates*. *International Journal of Education and Workforce Studies*, 9(1), 18–34. <https://doi.org/10.9143/ijews.2023.09103>
- Stofberg, R., Bussin, M., & Mabaso, C. M. (2022). Pay transparency, job turnover intentions and the mediating role of perceived organizational support and organizational justice. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 44(7), 162–182. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-02-2022-0077>
- Stofberg, R., Mabaso, C. M., & Bussin, M. H. R. (2022). Employee responses to pay transparency. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 48, a1906. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v48i0.1906>
- Subohi, S. (2025). Universities in Pakistan: Revisiting faculty compensation and retention. *Dawn Education Review*, 12 January 2025.
- Suleman, Q., Khattak, A. Z., & Hussain, I. (2021). Occupational stress: Associated factors, related symptoms, and coping strategies among secondary school heads. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 36(4).
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2019). *Using multivariate statistics* (7th ed.). Pearson.
- Tariq, F., Abrar, M., & Zia-ur-Rehman, M. (2024). High-performance work systems and faculty retention: Evidence from Pakistani business schools. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences*, 18(2), 201–220.
- Tenhiälä, A., Chung, C., & Park, Y. (2024). Procedural pay transparency, motivational climate, and employee outcomes. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 31(2), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15480518231216135>
- Tett, R. P., & Meyer, J. P. (1993). Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, and turnover: Path analyses. *Personnel Psychology*, 46(2), 259–293.
- Unilever Pakistan. (2025). *Unilever's living wage impact in Pakistan*. Unilever. <https://www.unilever.pk/news/2025/unilevers-living-wage-impact-in-pakistan>
- Werner, A. (2016). The ethics of the living wage: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 137(3), 433–447. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2562-z>

- Westman, M., Hobfoll, S. E., Chen, S., Davidson, O. B., & Laski, S. (2004). Organizational stress through the lens of conservation of resources (COR) theory. In *Exploring interpersonal dynamics* (Vol. 4, pp. 167-220). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Wong, C. S., & Law, K. S. (2002). The effects of leader and follower emotional intelligence on performance and attitude: An exploratory study. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13(3), 243-274. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(02\)00099-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00099-1)
- Wright, T. A., & Hobfoll, S. E. (2004). Commitment, psychological well-being and job performance: An examination of conservation of resources (COR) theory and job burnout. *Journal of Business and Management*, 9(4), 389-406.

