

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on the Intention to Stay and Leave the Company: A Study in the Construction Sector

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Abstract:

Background: This research is based on previous studies that establish a direct relationship between job satisfaction and employees' intention to stay or leave an organization. The literature suggests that perceptions of fairness, opportunities for growth, recognition, and positive interpersonal relationships are crucial factors for job satisfaction. Low satisfaction, on the other hand, is associated with a higher probability of turnover.

Method: A quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design was used to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and the intention to stay or leave the company in the construction industry. The sample consisted of 56 employees from the southern region of Brazil. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire, which included questions about job satisfaction, intention to stay or leave the company, and sociodemographic variables.

Results: The results of the linear regression analysis indicated that job satisfaction has a significant impact on employees' intention to stay with the company. More satisfied employees were more likely to stay with the organization, while those with low satisfaction were more likely to leave. These findings corroborate the existing literature, which associates job satisfaction with talent retention.

Conclusion: The research highlighted the importance of job satisfaction as a determining factor for employee retention in the construction industry. The results suggest that companies should invest in strategies to increase employee satisfaction, such as implementing professional development policies, creating a positive work environment, and offering development opportunities. By promoting job satisfaction, companies can reduce turnover, increase productivity, and strengthen organizational culture.

Key Word: Satisfaction; Intention to stay; Intention to leave.

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I. Introduction

Labor relations have been a fundamental element in the organization of society, based on the exchange of labor for capital. These relations, in essence, are mutually beneficial; however, low satisfaction on the part of either party can lead to the emergence of conflicts in the workplace, requiring interventions to ensure justice and harmony between employers and employees.

The construction industry stands out for its economic and social relevance, being one of the main generators of direct and indirect jobs. Acting as a link between the industry, commerce, and services sectors, this segment plays an essential role in urban development, ranging from small businesses to large metropolises. However, the high dependence on labor makes the sector particularly susceptible to labor conflicts, which often culminate in lawsuits. These lawsuits generate significant financial costs for companies, including legal fees and indemnities, resources that could be better used in implementing preventive policies to avoid the escalation of conflicts.

While conflicts in the workplace can have negative aspects, they also offer opportunities for transformation and innovation when addressed openly and constructively. However, in the construction industry, inadequate management practices, such as failures in recruitment and retention of workers¹, as well as working conditions that impact quality of life², contribute to high turnover. This dynamic not only affects the stability of the sector but also intensifies the costs associated with replacing qualified labor.

The literature suggests that low job satisfaction is one of the main factors that lead to an increase in the intention to leave the company, especially when conflicts are not resolved internally³. In addition, job satisfaction is directly associated with the decision to stay or leave an organization^{4,5}. Employee retention not only reduces

operational costs but also contributes to the maintenance of intellectual capital, an essential element for organizational competitiveness.

In view of this, the present study aims to investigate the effect of job satisfaction on the intentions to stay or leave the company in the context of the construction industry. Based on the results, it is expected to identify behavioral aspects that foster conflicts in labor relations and propose actions that can mitigate labor disputes, contributing to the construction of a more harmonious and productive environment in this strategic segment.

II. Background

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction represents the emotional state resulting from positive feelings associated with job performance⁶. The author also points out that dissatisfaction, in turn, is characterized by negative emotions that emerge when an individual's work and personal values are undervalued. The perception of fairness in the treatment offered to the employee by the company plays a fundamental role in job satisfaction⁷. Additionally, work that offers opportunities to achieve desired goals tends to generate greater contentment among employees⁸.

Feeling useful and perceiving that one's contributions are valued by the company are factors that stimulate job satisfaction⁴. Delegating tasks in a way that highlights the individual's importance to organizational processes is fundamental to strengthening the sense of relevance among employees⁹.

Employee satisfaction reflects the company's ability to meet the essential needs for employees to perform their functions effectively and productively¹⁰. Moreover, job satisfaction involves a range of factors that meet individuals' general needs, enhancing well-being and organizational productivity¹¹.

Elements linked to job satisfaction are closely related to aspects such as job security and the quality of the relationship with leadership. Even if the relationship between bosses and subordinates is harmonious, subordinates often perceive less openness in interactions with their superiors compared to their peers. This scenario can result in discomfort and reluctance to present ideas and suggestions for improvement. Additionally, the lack of opportunities to advance to higher positions also contributes to a loss of motivation, even considering that specific functions often require particular skills and training³.

Various factors can influence or be influenced by job satisfaction, such as interpersonal relationships among colleagues¹². When these relationships are marked by conflicts, generating even labor lawsuits, job satisfaction tends to decrease. On the other hand, low job satisfaction can also impact the quality of relationships among colleagues in the workplace.

Intention to Stay with the Company

Employee retention is a constant challenge for companies in different sectors, influenced by various critical factors. The literature highlights that strategies to promote employee retention include implementing career progression plans, salary policies consistent with assigned responsibilities, promoting an engaging organizational culture, and providing continuous motivation¹³.

Job satisfaction is directly related to the intention of employees to stay, as more satisfied individuals are more likely to continue with the company⁴. Moreover, job satisfaction has a positive effect on both retention and the intention to stay⁵. Studies indicate that these factors not only encourage retention but also strengthen the bond between the employee and the company. Based on these arguments, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H₁): Job satisfaction has a positive effect on the intention to stay with the company.

Intention to Leave the Company

Turnover, or the employee turnover rate in an organization, refers to the flow of employees entering and leaving the company. This fluctuation of personnel often results in financial and psychological losses for companies. Various factors contribute to this dynamic, including job satisfaction, remuneration, benefits offered, and the recruitment and selection process for new employees^{14, 15, 16}.

Employees who feel supported by their superiors tend to show greater job satisfaction and commitment to the company. As a consequence, their performance increases and their intention to quit decreases, indicating the significant benefits of management that values supporting employees¹⁷.

Additionally, low job satisfaction is directly associated with a higher probability of employees leaving the company⁴. This negative link between satisfaction and the intention to leave or quit is corroborated by studies that indicate that less satisfied employees are more likely to seek opportunities outside the company⁵. Based on these arguments, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2 (H₂): Job satisfaction has a negative effect on the intention to leave the company.

III. Method

To achieve the objective of this study, a quantitative approach of a descriptive nature was adopted, with a cross-sectional design. The sample was defined using convenience sampling, considering the accessibility and availability of participants, resulting in 56 employees from the construction sector in the southern region of Brazil.

Data collection was carried out through a survey, using a structured questionnaire that included sociodemographic variables and study variables (see Appendix). The main variables were measured as follows:

- a) **Job satisfaction:** Evaluated with five items (Appendix), using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represents "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree"¹⁸;
- b) **Intention to stay:** Measured with four items (Appendix), also on a 5-point Likert scale¹³;
- c) **Intention to leave:** Evaluated with five items (Appendix), using the same 5-point Likert scale¹⁷.

Additionally, the following sociodemographic variables were collected:

- a) Gender: Determined by a dichotomous question (male or female);
- b) Age: Measured by an open-ended question;
- c) Education: Identified by a multiple-choice question;
- d) Income: Evaluated by a multiple-choice question.

The questionnaire was previously submitted for approval by the construction companies to enable access to construction sites. Before application, it was validated by experts, including university professors, and submitted to a pre-test with three respondents to identify potential comprehension problems. After these steps, the questionnaire was applied in printed form to all participants.

The collected data was organized in an Excel spreadsheet, where it was formatted and reviewed. Inconsistent responses were discarded to ensure data integrity. Subsequently, a descriptive analysis of the sociodemographic data was conducted to understand the participants' profiles.

After the review, the data was imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, allowing for statistical analyses. The study variables were subjected to validity and reliability tests, with alpha coefficients above 0.700, indicating internal consistency of the scales. With the consolidated variables, linear regression analyses were performed to explore the relationships between the dependent and independent variables, meeting the objectives proposed by the study.

IV. Results

The sample for this research consisted of 56 employees in the construction sector in southern Brazil, all performing operational functions at construction sites. The participants, who had an employment relationship with the construction companies, voluntarily participated in the study.

Regarding gender composition, the sample was predominantly male, with 89.3% men and 10.7% women. The average age of participants was 32 years, with 34% of employees being up to 25 years old. On the other hand, only 5% of respondents were over 45 years old.

In terms of education, the distribution was balanced among the different levels of education. Approximately 39.2% of participants had completed or were attending elementary school, while 35.7% had completed or were attending high school. Finally, 25.1% had completed or were attending higher education.

Regarding monthly income, participants reported earnings between 1 and 10 minimum wages, with the majority (67.9%) reporting approximately two minimum wages. It is important to note that the question about income was presented in income ranges, a strategy that sought to preserve the privacy of respondents and ensure an environment of autonomy and impartiality in the responses.

This study verified the effect of job satisfaction on the intentions to stay or leave the company. To investigate these behavioral aspects that can generate conflicts in the relationship between employees and the company, the technique of linear regression analysis was used.

Two linear regression models were developed, as presented in Table 1. Model 1 examined the hypothesis that job satisfaction has a positive effect on the intention to stay with the company, while Model 2 investigated the hypothesis that job satisfaction influences the intention to leave the company.

The results obtained provide empirical evidence that helps understand how job satisfaction in the work environment directly affects employees' decisions regarding staying or leaving. These findings enrich the existing literature on human resource management and provide relevant insights for talent retention strategies in the construction industry.

Table 1: Summary of linear regression models

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Estimated standard error	Durbin-Watson
1	0.588	0.346	0.334	0.863	1.544
2	0.566	0.321	0.308	1.096	1.841

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The analysis of the proposed regression models revealed that Model 1 has an explanatory power of 34.6% ($R^2 = 0.346$), while Model 2 has an explanatory power of 32.1% ($R^2 = 0.321$). These results indicate that both models demonstrate a good explanatory power of the dependent variables, represented by the intention to stay or leave the company.

To validate the adequacy of the models, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique was applied, comparing Models 1 and 2 with a reference model that does not include explanatory variables (Table 2). The results showed that the inclusion of explanatory variables significantly increases the explanatory power of the models, confirming their relevance for understanding the phenomena studied.

Table 2: Analysis of variance of linear regression models

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.274	1	21.274	28.560	0.001
	Residual	40.225	54	0.745		
	Total	61.499	55			
2	Regression	30.652	1	30.652	25.500	0.001
	Residual	64.909	54	1.202		
	Total	95.561	55			

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The analysis of the adequacy of the regression models revealed statistical significance ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the proposed models differ significantly from a model without explanatory variables. This demonstrates that the inclusion of the independent variable contributes to increasing the explanatory power of the models.

The test of significance of the partial regression coefficients, including the independent variable, was performed as shown in Table 3. The results reinforce the validity of the models by evidencing the relevance of the independent variable in explaining the analyzed relationships.

Table 3: Linear regression coefficients of the models

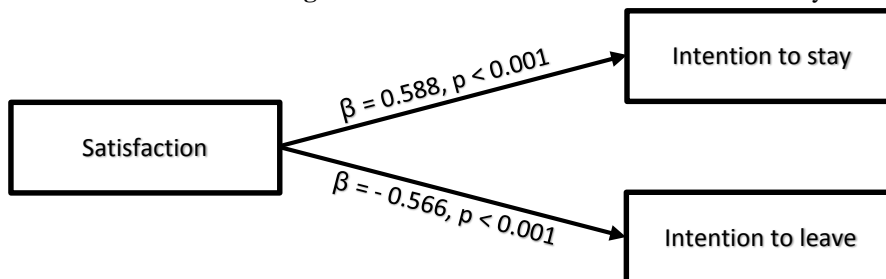
Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		Beta (β)	Error	Beta (β)			Tolerance	VIF
1	Intention to stay	1.236	0.474	0.588	2.608	0.012	1.000	1.000
	Satisfaction	0.578	0.108		5.344	0.001		
2	Intention to leave	4.944	0.602	-0.566	8.213	0.001	1.000	1.000
	Satisfaction	-0.694	0.137		-5.050	0.001		

Source: Prepared by the authors.

In Model 1, it is observed that the independent variable satisfaction ($\beta = 0.588$, $p < 0.001$) exerts a significant positive influence on the dependent variable intention to stay. These results indicate that the higher the job satisfaction, the greater the employee's intention to stay with the company, confirming H₁. This conclusion highlights the positive effect of job satisfaction on talent retention, corroborating findings from studies⁴, which also identified this relationship.

Similarly, Model 2 shows that the independent variable satisfaction ($\beta = -0.566$, $p < 0.001$) negatively influences the dependent variable intention to leave. In this case, low job satisfaction increases the likelihood of the employee wanting to leave the company, confirming H₂. These results highlight that the perception of justice and the organizational environment are critical factors for employee satisfaction and retention⁴. Thus, the results confirm the study's hypotheses (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Effect of satisfaction on intention to stay and leave



Source: Prepared by the authors.

These findings corroborate previous studies^{4,5}, evidencing that the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to stay or leave the company is interdependent. This dynamic highlights the importance of job satisfaction as a critical factor that directly influences employees' decisions, with significant implications for different economic sectors, including the construction industry, as shown by the data analyzed in this study.

V. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the effect of job satisfaction on the intentions to stay or leave the company in the context of the construction industry. The results confirmed that job satisfaction plays a significant role in employee retention, reducing turnover and promoting greater organizational stability. More satisfied employees are less inclined to seek new opportunities in other companies, evidencing the interdependent relationship between satisfaction and workplace behavior.

The research contributes to the literature by deepening the understanding of the dynamics between job satisfaction and intentions to stay or leave the company, highlighting critical aspects of the employee-employer relationship. The practical implications are equally relevant: from an organizational standpoint, the findings reinforce the need to regularly assess employee satisfaction, considering factors such as remuneration, job functions, and compliance with contractual agreements. Transparency in relationships, combined with the creation of incentives to promote the retention of professionals, can reduce costs associated with turnover and ensure the preservation of intellectual capital.

Despite its contributions, the study presents some limitations that should be considered. The research was conducted with a specific sample of employees in the construction sector in a single geographic region, which may limit the generalization of the findings to other sectors or regional contexts. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study prevents the identification of causal relationships, restricting the conclusions to the associations observed at the time of data collection. Another limitation is the exclusive focus on job satisfaction as a predictor variable, disregarding other relevant factors such as organizational climate, leadership style, growth opportunities, and working conditions.

Based on the results and limitations, it is recommended that future studies expand the investigation to other economic sectors and regions, enabling comparative analyses and greater generalization of the results. Longitudinal research can elucidate causal relationships, while the inclusion of new predictor variables, such as perceptions of justice and organizational support, can offer a more comprehensive view of the factors that influence employee retention and turnover. The adoption of qualitative or mixed methods is also encouraged, especially to capture contextual nuances in sectors with specific characteristics, such as the construction industry.

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Appendix

All items have a 5-point Likert-type scale response format. Participants responded to the items by rating each statement and indicating their opinion on the degree of agreement.

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.924$)		
I am very satisfied with my current job.	4.410	1.108
My present job gives me internal satisfaction.	4.210	1.171
My job gives me a sense of fulfilment.	4.090	1.240
I am very pleased with my current job.	4.340	1.195
I will recommend this job to a friend if it is announced.	4.200	1.407
Intention to stay ($\alpha = 0.727$)		
This company is able to retain quality employees.	4.320	1.029
I see myself working for this organization three years from now.	3.840	1.487
Even I had another job offer that paid more than the present one, I'd stay here.	3.160	1.499
I am not bothered about alternative employment in any other organization.	3.450	1.617
Intention to leave ($\alpha = 0.911$)		
I hope to find a new job next year.	2.250	1.673
I am always thinking about quitting my current job.	1.860	1.445
I am planning to quit my job.	1.890	1.448
I am looking forward to quitting my present job.	1.710	1.317
I am not thinking of quitting my present job (reverse-scored).	2.196	1.612