

The Effect of Employee Well-Being on Retention Intentions with Job Satisfaction as a Mediating Factor among College Lecturers in Chennai.

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of employee well-being initiatives on retention intentions, with job satisfaction acting as a mediating factor among college lecturers in Chennai. Employee retention is a critical issue in the education sector, particularly in higher education institutions where the loss of skilled lecturers can significantly affect academic quality and institutional reputation. The research employs a quantitative approach, using a structured questionnaire to gather data from college lecturers in Chennai. Key variables measured include various well-being initiatives (mental health support, physical health programs, professional development opportunities, flexible working hours, and recognition and rewards), job satisfaction, and retention intentions.

Keywords: Employee Well-Being, Retention Intentions, Job Satisfaction, College Lecturers, Structural Equation Modelling, Higher Education.

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Introduction

Employee retention is a pressing concern in various industries, including the education sector, where the stability and quality of academic staff significantly influence institutional success. In higher education, retaining qualified and experienced lecturers is critical to maintaining educational standards, fostering student success, and sustaining the institution's reputation (Muthusamy, 2022). Despite the importance of retention, many educational institutions face high turnover rates among their faculty members, leading to disruptions in academic programs and increased recruitment and training costs.

Among the various factors that influence retention, employee well-being has gained increasing attention. Well-being initiatives, which include mental health support, physical health programs, professional development opportunities, flexible working hours, and recognition and rewards, are believed to play a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction and, consequently, retention intentions (Callan & Lawrence, 2009). However, the specific impact of these initiatives on retention intentions, particularly within the context of higher education, remains underexplored.

This study focuses on college lecturers in Chennai, a major educational hub in India, to investigate the effect of employee well-being on retention intentions, with job satisfaction as a mediating factor. Chennai's higher education institutions face unique challenges, including high workloads, limited resources, and competitive pressures, which can affect lecturers' well-being and job satisfaction. Understanding how well-being initiatives can mitigate these challenges and promote retention is essential for developing effective human resource strategies.

The primary objectives of this research are to:

- Examine the relationship between various well-being initiatives and job satisfaction among college lecturers in Chennai.
- Assess the direct impact of job satisfaction on retention intentions.

- Explore the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between well-being initiatives and retention intentions.

By addressing these objectives, this study aims to provide valuable insights for higher education administrators and policymakers seeking to enhance lecturer retention through targeted well-being initiatives. The findings are expected to contribute to the broader understanding of employee retention dynamics in the education sector and offer practical recommendations for fostering a supportive and satisfying work environment for academic staff.

Theoretical work

The concept: Employee Well-Being

Employee well-being has emerged as a critical area of focus in organizational research, reflecting a holistic approach to understanding the physical, mental, and emotional health of employees. Well-being initiatives encompass various programs and policies designed to improve the overall quality of work life, including mental health support, physical health programs, flexible working hours, and professional development opportunities. Research has consistently shown that well-being initiatives lead to numerous positive outcomes, including enhanced job satisfaction, productivity, and reduced turnover intentions (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Grant et al., 2007).

Key components of well-being initiatives include:

Mental Health Support. Access to counselling services, stress management programs, and other mental health resources can significantly enhance employees' well-being (Robertson & Cooper, 2011). Mental health support in the workplace is crucial for maintaining employees' psychological well-being. According to a study by Muthusamy (2022), providing access to mental health resources and creating a supportive work environment can mitigate the negative effects of job stress and enhance overall job satisfaction. Another study by Danna and Griffin (1999) emphasized the importance of comprehensive mental health programs in promoting employee well-being and reducing turnover intentions.

Physical Health Programs. Programs that promote physical health, such as fitness facilities, health screenings, and ergonomic workspaces, can improve employees' physical well-being and reduce absenteeism (Goetzel & Ozminkowski, 2008). Physical health

programs, such as gym facilities, fitness classes, and health screenings, have been shown to improve employees' physical well-being and reduce absenteeism. A study by Parks and Steelman (2008) in the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* found that workplace wellness programs significantly reduce stress and improve physical health, leading to higher job satisfaction and productivity.

Professional Development Opportunities. Opportunities for career advancement, further education, and skill development are essential for maintaining employee engagement and satisfaction (Jahanzeb & Bashir, 2013). In academia, professional development can include attending conferences, pursuing research, and obtaining additional qualifications. A study by Noe et al. (2017) found that employees who engage in continuous learning and development activities report higher levels of job satisfaction and are less likely to leave their organizations. This is supported by the findings of Sultana et al. (2018), which showed that professional development programs significantly enhance employees' skills and competencies, leading to increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Flexible Working Hours. Flexibility in work schedules and the ability to work from home can help employees balance work and personal life, reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction (Kossek & Lautsch, 2017). Flexible working hours contribute to a better work-life balance and overall well-being. According to a study by Shockley and Allen (2007), flexible work arrangements are associated with reduced work-family conflict and higher job satisfaction. Additionally, Gajendran and Harrison (2007) found that telecommuting and flexible schedules improve employees' job satisfaction and organizational loyalty, thus decreasing turnover intentions.

Recognition and Rewards. Regular recognition and rewards for achievements, whether monetary or non-monetary, can enhance employees' sense of value and motivation (Deci et al., 1999). In educational institutions, recognizing lecturers' contributions to teaching, research, and community service is crucial. A study by Deci et al. (1999) highlighted that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards positively influence employees' motivation and job satisfaction. Moreover, a study by Brun and Dugas (2008) demonstrated that regular recognition and rewards contribute to employees' psychological well-being and reduce turnover intentions.

The concept: Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees feel fulfilled and content with their job roles. It is influenced by various factors, including work environment, job characteristics, and interpersonal relationships (Spector, 1997). High levels of job satisfaction are associated with numerous positive outcomes, such as increased productivity, lower absenteeism, and higher retention rates (Judge et al., 2001).

Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction. Several factors influence job satisfaction, including job characteristics, organizational support, and work-life balance. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966) posits that job satisfaction is influenced by motivators (e.g., achievement, recognition) and hygiene factors (e.g., salary, working conditions). Research supports the notion that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors play crucial roles in determining job satisfaction levels (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Excessive workloads and poor work-life balance can lead to burnout and job dissatisfaction (Winefield et al., 2003). Support from colleagues and supervisors can enhance job satisfaction by fostering a collaborative and positive work atmosphere (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). In addition, academic roles that allow for autonomy in teaching and research can increase job satisfaction by enabling lecturers to pursue their interests and innovate (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

H1: Well-being Initiatives positively affect job satisfaction among college lecturers in Chennai.

The concept: Retention Intentions

Retention intentions refer to employees' plans to remain with their current organization. High retention intentions are indicative of a stable and satisfied workforce, while low retention intentions often signal potential turnover (Hom et al., 2012). Retention is influenced by various factors, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived organizational support (Allen et al., 2003). Understanding the factors that influence retention intentions is essential for developing effective retention strategies (Hausknecht et al., 2009).

Factors Influencing Retention Intentions. Several factors influence retention intentions, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee well-being. Research indicates that employees who feel valued, supported, and satisfied with their job are more likely to stay with their organization (Holtom et al., 2008). In the context of higher

education, factors such as academic freedom, institutional support, and opportunities for professional growth are critical for retaining academic staff (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002).

Job Satisfaction and Retention Intentions. The relationship between job satisfaction and retention intentions has been extensively studied. Higher job satisfaction is consistently linked to lower turnover intentions (Lambert et al., 2001). Satisfied employees are more likely to remain with their organization, contribute positively to the work environment, and advocate for their institution (Meyer et al., 2002). In the academic context, job satisfaction is influenced by factors such as work autonomy, institutional support, and recognition (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012).

H2: Well-being Initiatives positively affect Retention Intention among college lecturers in Chennai.

H3: Job Satisfaction positively affect Retention Intention among college lecturers in Chennai.

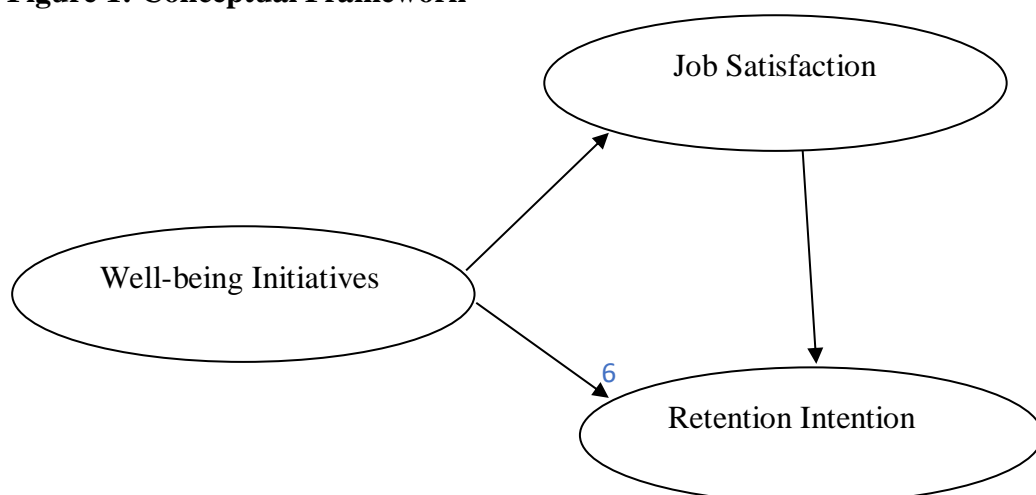
The mediating role of Job Satisfaction

The relationship between well-being initiatives and retention intentions is complex, with job satisfaction often serving as a mediating factor. Studies have shown that well-being initiatives can enhance job satisfaction, which in turn positively influences retention intentions (Harter et al., 2002). For example, mental health support and professional development opportunities can increase lecturers' job satisfaction by reducing stress and providing career growth opportunities, leading to higher retention intentions (Grawitch et al., 2006).

H4: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between Well-being Initiatives and Retention intentions.

Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical model of the study, elucidating the relationships among the variables under investigation.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Methodology

Sample and Procedure

The study involved 248 college lecturers from different higher education institutions in Chennai. Data collection was conducted through an online survey distributed via email and shared through professional networks and academic forums to maximize participation. Participation was voluntary, with confidentiality and anonymity of responses assured to respondents. The data was analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), a statistical technique combining factor and regression analyses. SEM is ideal for testing intricate models with multiple variables and examining both direct and indirect relationships. Demographic details of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Most participants are in the age groups of 25-34 years (32.3%) and 35-44 years (30.6%), reflecting a mix of early-career and experienced lecturers. Women make up the majority in lecturer roles (61.3%), indicating higher female representation in Chennai's academia. Around half of the lecturers work at colleges (54.8%), with the rest at universities, providing a balanced perspective on institutional types. Experience levels vary, with significant numbers having 1-6 years (1-3 years at 24.2%, 4-6 years at 25.8%) and more experienced ones (more than 10 years at 14.5%). Most lecturers hold a Doctorate (54.8%) or Master's degree (43.5%), highlighting strong educational qualifications. The majority are Assistant Professors (75.8%), suggesting many are early in their academic careers.

Table 1: Demographic Profiles

N = 248		Frequency
Age	Less than 25 years	8.1 %
	25 – 34 years	32.3 %
	35 – 44 years	30.6 %
	45 – 54 years	12.9 %
	55 and above	16.1 %
Gender	Male	38.7 %
	Female	61.3 %
Type of Institution	College	54.8 %
	University	45.2 %
Years of Experience	Less than 1 year	19.4 %

	1 – 3 years	24.2 %
	4 – 6 years	25.8 %
	7 – 10 years	16.1 %
	More than 10 years	14.5 %
Highest Education Qualification	Master's degree	43.5 %
	Doctorate	54.8 %
Current Position	Assistant Professor	75.8 %
	Associate Professor	9.7 %
	Professor	14.5 %

Measures

Participants rated well-being initiatives (mental health support, physical health programs, professional development opportunities, flexible working hours, recognition and rewards) on a scale from 1 to 5 to assess their impact on retention intentions. Job satisfaction was measured by statements about roles, skills utilization, feeling valued, supervisor support, and workload. Retention intentions were evaluated through statements about staying at their institution, future plans, commitment, willingness to recommend, job search activity, and overall satisfaction. This analysis aimed to understand how well-being initiatives, job satisfaction, and retention intentions relate (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000).

Data analysis and Results

The study utilized Smart PLS 4 and Jamovi for conducting PLS-SEM analysis, beginning with the measurement model followed by the structural model. PLS-SEM is chosen for its non-parametric nature, making it suitable for variance-based models that do not assume data distribution. Particularly in the social sciences, PLS-SEM is ideal for analysing quantitative data and constructing path models. Its advantages include efficient implementation of path models, making it a preferred method for multivariate analysis in social science research (Hair et al., 2013). This approach allowed for the development and evaluation of our model, ensuring both reliability and validity through rigorous measurement and structural model analyses.

Table 2 presents the measurement model for well-being initiatives, job satisfaction, and retention intentions among college lecturers in Chennai. Each construct's items exhibit strong factor loadings above 0.7, indicating good convergent validity (Hair et al., 2018).

Based on the beta coefficients, the analysis shows how different initiatives impact the well-being, job satisfaction, and retention intention of college lecturers. Items like MHS2 (-0.835), PHP2 (-0.375), PHP3 (-0.726), PDO1(-0.706), PDO2 (-0.590), PDO3: (-0.886), FWH3 (-0.907), RR1(-0.939) are negatively affected their construct Well-being Initiatives. All other item of Well-being Initiatives is positively influencing the construct. In Job Satisfaction construct, all items positively influence job satisfaction (coefficients ranging from 0.698 to 0.955). Similarly, in Retention Intention construct, all items positively influence retention intention (coefficients ranging from 0.805 to 0.956). The analysis suggests that Physical Health Programs (PHP) and Professional Development Opportunities (PDO) may not significantly support the well-being, job satisfaction, and retention intention of college lecturers.

Cronbach's alphas range from 0.905 to 0.947 for job satisfaction and retention intentions, respectively, suggesting high internal consistency. Composite reliabilities exceed 0.8 for all constructs, confirming robust reliability. Average variance extracted (AVE) values, though slightly below the recommended threshold of 0.7 for Well-being Initiatives construct, still indicate acceptable convergent validity (Hair et al., 2018). Overall, these findings support the reliability and validity of the measurement model used.

Table 2: Measurement Model

Constructs	Items		β	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Well-being Initiatives	Mental Health Support	MHS1	0.878	0.963	0.701	0.673
		MHS2	-0.835	0.963		
		MHS3	0.894	0.963		
	Physical Health	PHP1	0.423	0.964		
		PHP2	-0.375	0.964		

	Programs	PHP3	-0.726	0.963		
	Professional	PDO1	-0.706	0.962		
	Development	PDO2	-0.590	0.962		
	Opportunities	PDo3	-0.886	0.962		
	Flexible	FWH1	0.938	0.963		
	Working	FWH2	0.890	0.964		
	Hours	FWH3	-0.907	0.963		
	Recognition	RR1	-0.939	0.962		
	and Rewards	RR2	0.993	0.963		
		RR3	0.997	0.962		
Job Satisfaction		JS1	0.698	0.964	0.905	0.767
		JS2	0.945	0.964		
		JS3	1.000	0.963		
		JS4	0.950	0.963		
		JS5	0.955	0.964		
Retention Intention		RI1	0.900	0.964	0.947	0.839
		RI2	0.806	0.963		
		RI3	0.956	0.963		
		RI4	0.903	0.963		
		RI5	0.805	0.963		

Model fit measures

The adequacy of the SEM-PLS model fit is assessed through metrics like the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the chi-square (χ^2) statistic. These measures provide insights into how well the model fits the data and its overall goodness-of-fit assessment. Table 3 presents the model fit statistics for the structural model in the study, showing a chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 664$, $df = 272$, $p < .001$) that indicates a significant lack of exact fit, which is common in large sample sizes. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR = 0.0777) suggests good fit, as values below 0.08 are generally considered acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1998). However, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.152, 90% CI [0.138, 0.167]) exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating mediocre fit. The Akaike Information Criterion (AIC = 4046) and Bayesian

Information Criterion (BIC = 4212), with lower values indicating better fit, further support the adequacy of the model fit. These findings suggest a model that fits reasonably well overall.

Additionally, discriminant validity is assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. The HTMT values between constructs (WBI, JS, RI) are 0.845 (between WBI and JS), 0.884 (between WBI and RI), and 0.992 (between JS and RI). These values indicate that the correlations between different constructs are significantly lower than 1.0, suggesting adequate discriminant validity as they do not exceed the threshold of 1.0, thereby supporting the distinction between constructs in the model. Detailed results are presented in Table 4.

Table 3: Model Fit

Test for Exact Fit

χ^2	df	p
664	272	< .001

Fit Measures

SRMR	RMSEA	AIC	BIC
0.0777	0.152	4046	4212

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

Heterotrait - Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations

	WBI	JS	RI
WBI	1.000	-	-
JS	0.845	1.000	-
RI	0.884	0.992	1.000

Structural model assessment

The structural model assessment highlights significant pathways between constructs. Specifically, Well-being Initiatives (WBI) positively influence Job Satisfaction (JS) ($\beta = 0.9274$, $p < 0.001$), which in turn positively impacts Retention Intention (RI) ($\beta = 0.8859$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, WBI directly affects RI, albeit to a lesser extent ($\beta = 0.0977$, $p = 0.012$). The indirect effect of WBI on RI through JS is substantial ($\beta = 0.822$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that JS partially mediates the relationship between WBI and RI. Path coefficients, p value results are shown in Table 5.

Table 6 further illustrates these findings, indicating that direct effects account for 67.7% of the relationship, while indirect effects through JS account for 32.3%, emphasizing the dual pathways through which well-being initiatives influence retention intentions among college lecturers in Chennai.

Assessment of hypothesized model

As predicted, all findings from table 5, table 6 and Figure 2 of path model provide robust empirical support for all four hypotheses, highlighting the critical role of well-being initiatives in influencing job satisfaction and, subsequently, retention intentions among college lecturers in Chennai. The hypotheses tested in the structural model are supported by the analysis:

H1: Well-being Initiatives positively affect job satisfaction among college lecturers in Chennai.

The path coefficient from Well-being Initiatives to Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.9274$, $p < 0.001$) indicates a strong positive effect, supporting H1.

H2: Well-being Initiatives positively affect Retention Intention among college lecturers in Chennai.

The direct path from Well-being Initiatives to Retention Intention ($\beta = 0.0977$, $p = 0.012$) supports H2, showing a positive albeit weaker effect.

H3: Job Satisfaction positively affects Retention Intention among college lecturers in Chennai.

The path coefficient from Job Satisfaction to Retention Intention ($\beta = 0.8859$, $p < 0.001$) supports H3, indicating a strong positive relationship.

H4: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between Well-being Initiatives and Retention intentions.

The significant indirect effect of Well-being Initiatives on Retention Intention through Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.822$, $p < 0.001$) supports H4, confirming that Job Satisfaction acts as a mediator in the relationship between Well-being Initiatives and Retention Intention.

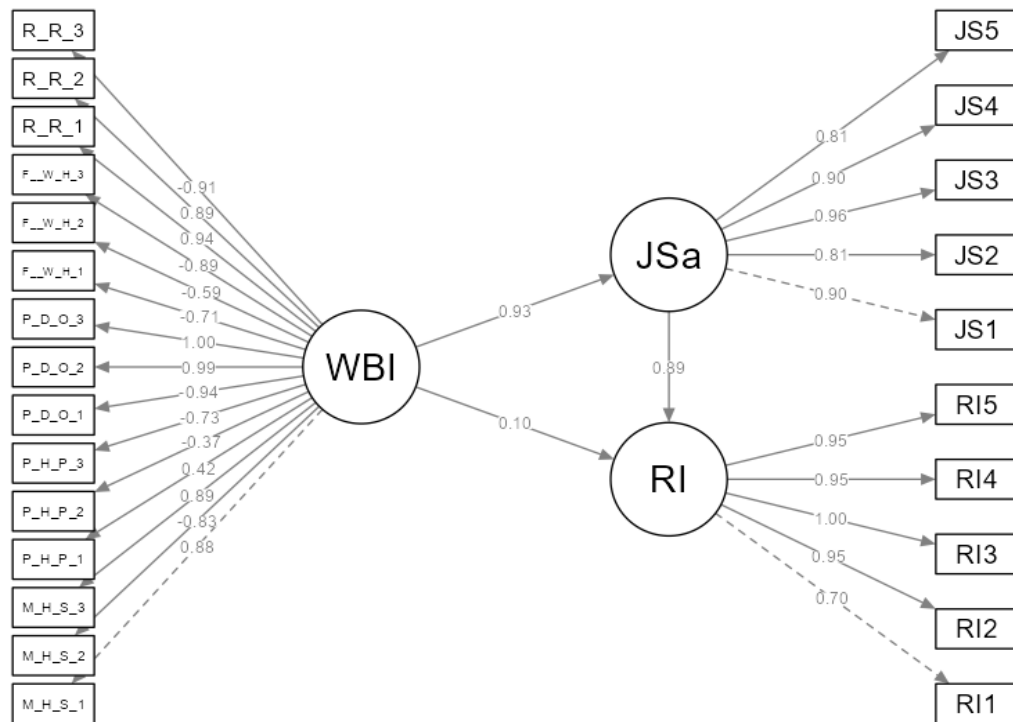
Table 5: Structural Model Assessment

Path	Label	β	Estimate	SE	z	p
WBI -> JS	p26	0.9274	0.9501	0.035	10.77	<0.001
JS -> RI	p27	0.8859	0.6875	0.133	3.392	<0.001
WBI -> RI	p28	0.0977	0.0777	0.180	0.398	0.012
WBI -> JS -> RI	pIE1	0.822	0.653	0.196	3.332	<0.001

Table 6: Mediation Estimates

Effect	Path	Label	p	% Mediation
Direct	WBI -> RI	p28	0.012	67.7
Indirect	WBI -> JS -> RI	pIE1	<0.001	32.3

Figure 2: Path Model



Discussions

The study shows that well-being initiatives significantly boost job satisfaction among college lecturers in Chennai. This indicates that supportive programs improve how satisfied lecturers feel with their work. While these initiatives also positively affect lecturers' intentions to stay in their roles, the strongest predictor of staying is job satisfaction itself. Essentially, when lecturers are more satisfied with their jobs, they are more likely to want to continue working there. The study also confirms that job satisfaction acts as a mediator between well-being initiatives and retention intentions, meaning that improving job satisfaction indirectly supports lecturers' desire to stay in their jobs. Overall, creating a supportive work environment and investing in lecturer well-being are crucial for boosting satisfaction and encouraging long-term commitment among lecturers in educational settings.

Implications

These findings suggest practical steps for educational institutions to improve lecturer satisfaction and retention. By implementing targeted well-being initiatives such as mental health support and flexible work options, institutions can enhance job satisfaction among lecturers, thereby increasing their likelihood to stay in their roles.

Moreover, the study highlights the direct correlation between job satisfaction and lecturer retention. Lecturers who are more satisfied with their jobs are more inclined to remain in their positions, underscoring the importance of improving working conditions, offering career advancement opportunities, and ensuring equitable recognition and rewards.

Strategic human resource management plays a critical role. Institutions should integrate well-being and satisfaction metrics into their retention strategies, regularly assess lecturer satisfaction levels, and support professional development and work-life balance. Ongoing research and evaluation will help institutions adapt these strategies to meet evolving lecturer needs, ensuring sustained success in retaining talented lecturers and fostering a positive academic environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, improving lecturer satisfaction and retention in educational institutions involves prioritizing well-being initiatives and strategic management. By investing in programs that support mental health and offer flexible work options, institutions can create a supportive environment that promotes loyalty. The study highlights the critical role of job satisfaction in lecturers' intentions to stay. Enhancing working conditions, providing career growth opportunities, and ensuring fairness are key to boosting satisfaction and retention. Strategic human resource practices, including regular satisfaction assessments and support for development, are crucial. Continuous research will refine these strategies to meet lecturer needs and maintain a positive academic environment that attracts and retains talent, ensuring long-term institutional success.

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