The Effect of Employee Empowerment, Organizational Support, and Ethical Climate on Turnover Intention: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract
The effectiveness and efficiency of any organization is dependent on the empowerment of its human resources as well as the presence of an ethical climate and organizational support. Hence, this article aims to analyze the impact of employee empowerment, ethical climate, and perceived organizational support on employee turnover intention directly and indirectly with the mediating role of job satisfaction. The data related to a sample of 215 employees of one of the biggest universities in Mashhad, Iran, was obtained using a questionnaire, which was then analyzed by Warp PLS 4. Results show that job satisfaction has a negative effect on turnover intention. Moreover, the positive effect of employee empowerment, ethical climate, and perceived organizational support on job satisfaction and the negative effect of ethical climate and perceived organizational support on turnover intention are supported. Results also support the point that job satisfaction mediates the effect of ethical context and perceived organizational support on turnover intention. The current study contributes to the present organizational literature on the social exchange theory and human resource outcomes. Guidelines are provided to the managers on how to address job satisfaction and turnover intension.

Keywords: Empowerment, Ethical climate, Organizational support, Job satisfaction, Turnover intention.

Introduction

The current development in the business settings leads to talent scarcity due to the decreasing supply of quality workers and the aging of the employees. Even those organizations which are benefited from talented employees are exposed themselves to the risk of losing their staff (Varma & Chavan 2020). Moreover, turnover intention is considered as one of the important areas of literature which has been widely investigated in theory and practice due to the

awareness that exists about its potential costs including recruiting and expenses as well as the decreased productivity of organization (Ganji & Johnson, 2020; Ganji et al., 2020; Lin & Liu, 2017; Palanski et al., 2014; Shareef & Atan, 2019). As the costs of voluntary turnover are high, it is important for organizations to increase their understanding about variables affecting employee turnover intentions (Rigter, 2017), especially in the modern aggressive and fast-changing business settings (Sahi & Mahajan, 2014). Therefore, it is essential for organizations to distinguish the early symptoms of employees' leaving behaviors in order to take required remedial measures (Lin & Liu, 2017; Varma & Chavan 2020). Job satisfaction is a key factor determining the employees' rate of absenteeism and turnover intention in the literature (Chen & Wang, 2019; Ganji & Johnson, 2020; Li et al., 2019). Job satisfaction indicates an individual's positive or negative feelings about their job based on their understanding of the job (Varma & Chavan, 2020; Zehir et al., 2011) and the organizational climate (Tsai, 2014). Literature suggests a direct correlation between job satisfaction and turnover intention (Ahanchian & Ganji, 2017). Researchers have explained that job satisfaction is not only determined by tangible factors (e.g., remuneration and promotion), but also it depends on the self-determination of workers in their job as a result of empowerment (Idris et al., 2018). Other highlighted factors in the literature influencing job satisfaction and turnover intention are employee empowerment (Chinomona et al., 2017; Sandhya & Sulphey, 2019), ethical climate (Ahanchian & Ganji, 2017; Ganji & Ahanchian, 2016), family emotional support (Ganji & Johnson, 2020) and organizational support (Albalawi et al., 2019; Ganji & Kafashpor, 2016). Accordingly, the effect of three work-related factors – including ethical climate, organizational support, and employee empowerment – on employees' job satisfaction and turnover intention is investigated in the current study.

One of the challenges that universities face is their employee turnover, because academic employees are most likely to find better jobs in private universities nearby (Shareef & Atan, 2019). Moreover, Inadequate ethical behavior and organizational support as well as the low level of employee empowerment are among the major problems in several Iranian organizations (Kokabi, 2009; Nakhaie et al., 2011), which is not limited to a particular organization (Ahanchian & Ganji, 2017). Amongst all, ethical climate, employee empowerment, and organizational support are three key components that attract much attention in the academic context (e.g., Ahanchian & Ganji, 2017; Malički et al., 2019; Putra et al., 2019). It is predicted that empowered employees working in ethical and supportive environment are more satisfied with their job, and are less likely to consider quitting their organization. Moreover, according to the institutional theory, universities can develop ethical manners in society by institutionalizing ethical codes among their employees and transfer them to students (Ahanchian & Ganji, 2017). These three work-related factors (that is, ethical climate, organizational support, and employee empowerment) are taken into account in current study because previous studies have shown that managers often underestimate the key role of employee empowerment and the provision of a supportive and ethical environment in job satisfaction and employees turnovers rates (Ahanchian & Ganji, 2017; Abou Elnaga & Imran, 2014). Moreover, several managers suppose that employee empowerment might decrease their power in the organization (Abou Elnaga & Imran, 2014).

Significance of the Study

The present research examines the effect of employee empowerment, ethical climate, and organizational support on job satisfaction and turnover intention and the ensuing implications for the universities in Iran. This survey intends to make the top management understand the importance of employee empowerment, ethical climate, and organizational support as a means of

enhancing job satisfaction and decreasing the employees' turnover intention. The influence of employee empowerment, ethical climate, and organizational support has already been examined in previous studies separately. However, the present study will enrich the present literature as it combines the effect of employee empowerment, ethical climate, and organizational support on the job satisfaction and turnover intention. Moreover, the mediating role of job satisfaction is investigated in this study, which contributes to the current literature. It is predicted that universities will be benefited from this study as it can help them enhance the job satisfaction of their workers and decrease their turnover intention. This survey would be beneficial for university managers in building the productive human resources for their universities.

Research Gap

Relying on the Hertzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, the current study aims to link motivational factors including ethical climate, employee empowerment, and organizational support on job satisfaction. There is a research gap in the literature as there are unclear and insufficient studies which have analyzed the mediating role of job satisfaction in the effect of these work-related factors (i.e., ethical climate, employee empowerment, and organizational support) on turnover intention. Actually, a few studies (e.g., Shafique et al., 2018) have set out to investigate the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between ethical leadership and turnover intention. Nonetheless, no study on the effect of ethical climate on turnover was found by the authors of this article. Moreover, the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between employee empowerment and turnover intention is examined in this article due to Humborstad and Perry's (2011) calls for further research in explaining the black box between these two variables. Therefore, to address this research gap, the current paper aims to investigate the effect of employee empowerment, ethical climate, and organizational support on job satisfaction and turnover intention among the staff of one of the prestigious universities in Mashhad, Iran. The mediating role of job satisfaction in the foregoing relationship is also investigated in this study.

Research Objectives and Questions

The purpose of the current research is to examine the relationships of employee empowerment, ethical climate, and organizational support with employees' job satisfaction and turnover intention. Moreover, the second purpose of this study is to investigate the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between these selected organizational factors and turnover intention. Thus, the current study tends to answer these questions:
1. Is there any relationship between selected work-related factors – including ethical climate, organizational support, and employee empowerment – and employee turnover intention?
2. Does job satisfaction mediate the link between selected work-related factors – including ethical climate, organizational support, and employee empowerment – and employee turnover intention?

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Turnover Intention (TI)

Although actual turnover and turnover intention are distinct concepts, turnover intention is the most powerful anticipant of actual turnover (Ganji & Johnson, 2020; Rigter 2017; Shareef & Atan, 2019). Actual turnover is described as the actual step of leaving the organization, while

turnover intention indicates the intent of an employeeto leave the job or organization voluntarily (Li et al., 2019; Shafique et al., 2018). Voluntary turnover is associated with the decreased individual performance and increased costs for organization (Li & Jones, 2013). Olawale and Olanrewaju (2016) define turnover intention as the willingness of a worker to quick a company by looking for a new job. Turnover intentions are chronological phases beginning with the employee's inactive search to find another job and ending with their choice to leave the organization (Oluwaseun, 2016).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is addressed as the most frequent construct in respect of organizational psychology and behavior (Li et al., 2019; Shafique et al., 2018). It refers to the individuals' feelings or attitude to the job and its features (Idris et al., 2018; Zehir et al., 2011). Based on the literature, job satisfaction is considered as the employee's sense of gratification and fulfillment at the workplace (Chan, 2019; Olcer, 2015; Top et al., 2015). Job satisfaction can be considered the feeling of individuals toward segments of the job and the job as a whole (Oluwaseun, 2016). It can be defined as the delightful emotional feeling or attitude that results from an individual's gratefulness for their own job, work atmosphere, and the earned payment rewards based on the experience (Yousef, 2017).

*Th*e *Impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention*

The concept of employee empowerment has become widespread (Ivanova & Scheve, 2019) as it accompanies a variety of important issues including quality management, restructuring, teamwork, learning process, and other concepts related to the achievement and competitiveness of the company (Lassoued et al., 2020). It is also derived from some concepts including industrial democracy, participative management style, and job enrichment (Chinomona et al., 2017). Employee empowerment is defined as the extent to which human resources are motivated for decision-making autonomously (Haas, 2010), without checking it with supervisors or managers (Dinç, 2015; Ivanova & Scheve, 2019). There are two kinds of empowerment, namely structural empowerment and psychological empowerment. Structural empowerment describes the organizational arrangements improving communication and enabling employees to participate on decision-making in organization (Amor et al., 2020; Asif et al., 2019; Haas, 2010). Psychological empowerment, known as an employee empowerment (Idris et al., 2018), refers to enhancement in task incentive or feelings of self-motivation by satisfying an employee's need for autonomy (Singh & Sarkar, 2018; Suifan et al., 2020). It provides a sense of affiliation, which engages an employee with the workplace (Fock et al., 2011). In this study, psychological empowerment is considered to measure employee empowerment.

   The employee empowerment increases employees' satisfaction by providing information about performance, work, and goals (Idris et al., 2018). Psychological empowerment strengthens a relationship between the employees and the firm, and enhances their positive attitude toward all jobs offered to them (Aziri, 2011; Idris et al., 2018). Employee empowerment improves job satisfaction through inciting employees to contact their managers and colleagues and providing inclusive policies and reliable responses (Fock et al., 2011; Valdez et al., 2019). Empowerment emphasizes formal and informal information-sharing, employee participation in decision-making, enhancing employees' self-confidence, self-reliance, and well-being, and consequently leads to positive outcomes such as a considerable degree of job satisfaction, performance, and productivity (Chinomona et al., 2017; Idris et al., 2018; Valdez et al., 2019; Yuliandi, 2019). Due to limited supportive studies on the

relationship between employee psychological empowerment and job satisfaction in developing countries (Idris et al., 2018), in the current study, this relation is investigated in an Iranian context with its different cultural background (Hofstede, 1997), since different cultural conditions result in different behaviors (Moghadam & Assar, 2008). For example, as shown in a study by Dastmalchian et al. (2001), Iranian managers showed relatively high levels of power distance. This characteristic may lead the Iranian managers to concentrate less on employee empowerment, as they find it in conflict with their authority (Abou Elnaga & Imran, 2014). Therefore, the current research addresses the following hypothesis:

H1: Empowering Employees influences their job satisfaction positively.

According to social exchange theory, when an employee is psychologically empowered by the organization, he/she tries to compensate by continuing to cooperate with the organization. Thus, an empowered employee shows a low level of turnover intention (Lyu et al., 2019; Sandhya & Sulphey, 2019). Previous studies found that employees' empowerment negatively affects the intention to leave, because it increases the employees' responsibility for their activities and behaviors by allowing them to participate them in decision-making (Kim & Fernandez, 2017). Likewise, Sandhya and Sulphey (2019) showed that the environment with poor opportunity for employees' empowerment increases employees' intention to leave. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Employee empowerment negatively influences employee turnover intention.

The Impact of Ethical Climate on Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Ethical climate refers to a sort of common codes and informal insights of organizational arrangements that shape concerns for ethical issues within the firm (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Shapira-Lishchinsky and Rosenblatt (2010) refer to the ethical climate as the psychological explanation of employees about the ethical policies of their firm. Ethical climate provides guidelines helping employees to understand the acceptable rather than unacceptable behaviors (Teresi et al., 2019). Overall, ethical climate is related to both increasing positive work behaviors and preventing devious behaviors in organization (Newman et al., 2017). Several studies address ethical climate as a unidimensional construct (e.g., Asgari et al., 2019; Chinomona, 2017), whereas others reckon it as a multidimensional component (e.g., Teresi et al., 2019). Victor and Cullen (1988) provide an ethical climate theory that highlights nine ethical climates based on three primary groups of ethical theories including egoism, benevolence, and principle theory. Egoistic climate refers to the norms that encourage self–interest in employees. The climate of benevolence refers to the individuals' ethical decision by considering whether our behavior might cause positive or negative effects on other people. Principal climate concentrates on individuals' ethical decisions based on the general principle of right and wrong. The existing literature refers to five ethical climates, including caring, rules, law and codes, independence, and instrumental ethical climate (Buchan et al., 2019; Ismail & Yuhanis, 2019; Martin & Cullen, 2006). Martin and Cullen (2006) employed caring climate to highlight a preference for the shared welfare; this was related to the benevolence climate suggested by Victor and Cullen (1988). Martin and Cullen (2006) defined the instrumental climate as a self-interest trait based on egoistic criterion. They also refer to the rule-oriented climate and law and codes associated with the principal ethical climate, which concentrate on regulations, criteria, and codes addressing ethical behaviors. They also offer the independence climate that highlights the individuals' moral belief, ethics, and values in

ethical decisions. The consideration of different dimensions of ethical behavior to measure ethical climate can provide more to enrich understanding about the ethical climate of organizations (Moore, 2012). Therefore, four dimensions of caring, rules, law and codes, and instrumental ethical climate is considered in the present study in the single-construct of organizational ethical climate .

Job satisfaction is one of the most popular outcomes of ethical climate investigated by different research scholars (e.g., Ahanchian & Ganji, 2017; Asgari et al., 2019; Olayiwola, 2016). Studies often explain that ethical climate can predict job satisfaction positively (e.g., Asgari et al., 2019; Özden et al., 2019). For example, Abadiga et al. (2019) found that ethical climate strongly predicts nurses' job satisfaction. Schminke et al. (2005) suggested that there is a link between the caring and the rules dimension of ethical climate and job satisfaction. Asgari et al. (2019) also showed that employees who found their workplace with a favorable ethical climate were more likely to have a high extent of job satisfaction. Supported by all these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Ethical climate positively influences employee job satisfaction.

Studies show that ethical climate can affect turnover intention negatively (e.g., Nurtati et al., 2020; Robel et al., 2016). Based on Robel et al. (2016) study, the ethical practices in the workplace can improve a bond between staff and organization and can reduce their turnover intention. Ethical climate is the main predictor of intention to leave the organization since these climates might promote a caring, professional and fair settings (Olayiwola, 2016). Ethical climate offers clues about an organization's policies (as comprehended by employees) that increase employee identification and reduce their turnover intention (Joe et al., 2018). Based on these results, the following hypothesis is developed:

H4: Ethical climate negatively impacts employee turnover intention.

The Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Organizational support theory explains that human resources feel the amount of effort the organization makes to satisfy their socioeconomic needs and reward their efforts (Worku, 2015). The perceived organizational support is one of the important constructs in the relationship between employee and firm. Eisenberger et al. (1986) suggested perceived organizational support as employees' perceptions regarding the amount of attention the organization pays to their contribution. Organizational support refers to an employee's feeling that the firm values their contribution and considers their well-being, and includes moral support, recognition, and provision of information, training, and other tools for employers (Hwansuk & WeiSheng, 2017, Varma & Chavan, 2020). Organizational support is defined as a transaction between the staff who is loyal and the firm that offers social and economic support (Chinomona et al., 2017).

Literature on organizational behavior has suggested that among the major antecedents of job satisfaction is perceived organizational support (e.g., Mabasa & Ngirande, 2015). For example, Karatepe (2012) states that a low level of perceived organizational support decreases the level of job satisfaction. Moreover, Chinomona et al. (2017) show that those employees who consider their organization as supportive are more likely to have job satisfaction. According to past research, this paper posits:

H5: Perceived organizational support positively influences employee job satisfaction.

On the other hand, a low level of perceived organizational support leads to withdrawal behaviors including absenteeism, sabotage of equipment, and turnover intention (Worku, 2015). According to the social exchange theory, perceived organizational support is more likely to cause the feelings of affective attachment in the employee, and result in a lower level of turnover intention (Lyu et al., 2019; Wong & Wong, 2017). Satardien et al. (2019) show that perceived organizational support predicts turnover intention negatively. Based on these results, the following hypothesis is developed:

H6: Employees' perceived organizational support negatively influences their turnover intention.

The Impact of Job Satisfaction on Turnover Intention

Job satisfaction is defined as the degree of satisfactory feeling for a job and its major aspects (Cicolini et al., 2014). Based on literature, job satisfaction can predict turnover intention negatively (Olayiwola, 2016), therefore dissatisfied employers intend to quit the organization, which consequently results in actual turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000). Previous studies showed that employees' job satisfaction had a negative effect on their intention to leave and turnover intention (Kihye et al., 2015; Li et al., 2019). Lee et al. (2019) also show that job satisfaction is a main anticipator of employees' turnover intention. Then, the following hypothesis may be put forward:

H7: Employees' job satisfaction influences their turnover intention negatively.

The Mediating Impact of Job Satisfaction

Researchers explain that ethical manner in an organization leads employees to a pleasant feeling regarding their job, who then tend to feel safe and conserved at the workplace. This translates into promoted job satisfaction and positive attitudes that decrease employee turnover intention (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Ganji & Johnson, 2020). There are not any studies to our best knowledge that have tested the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between ethical climate and turnover. However, few studies show the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between ethical leadership and turnover intention (e.g., Shafique et al., 2018). Therefore, it is predictable that ethical climate in a firm may reduce turnover intention by increasing employees' job satisfaction. Thus, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

H8: Employee job satisfaction mediates the impact of ethical climate on turnover intention.

Moreover, through job satisfaction, psychological empowerment may influence turnover intention. Pertinent to this issue is Humborstad and Perry's (2011) study that showed that the employee empowerment decreases turnover intention through the mediating effect of employee job attitude (including job satisfaction and commitment). However, there is a lack of empirical studies investigating the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between employee psychological empowerment and turnover intention. To fill this research gap, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H9: Employee job satisfaction mediates the impact of employee empowerment on turnover intention.

This study also considers job satisfaction as a mediator between perceived organizational support and turnover intention. Imran et al. (2014) and Jayasundera et al. (2016) have found

job satisfaction to have the role of mediator in the relationship between perceived organizational support and turnover intention. Further, Cropanzano et al. (1993) have also provided support for the mediating impact of job satisfaction in this relation. Moreover, Zhou (2009) found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and turnover intention. Based on this discussion, this hypothesis was developed:

H10: Employee job satisfaction mediates the impact of perceived organizational support on turnover intention.

According to Hertzberg's motivational theory, the current study conceptualizes the effect of motivational factors including ethical climate, employee empowerment, and organizational support on job satisfaction. Moreover, the impact of these factors on turnover intention draws on social exchange theory, showing that employees are less likely to quite a job in exchange for the perceived benefits and respects that come from the organization. Thus, based on these theoretical frameworks and previous hypotheses, the proposed model of this research is shown in Figure 1:
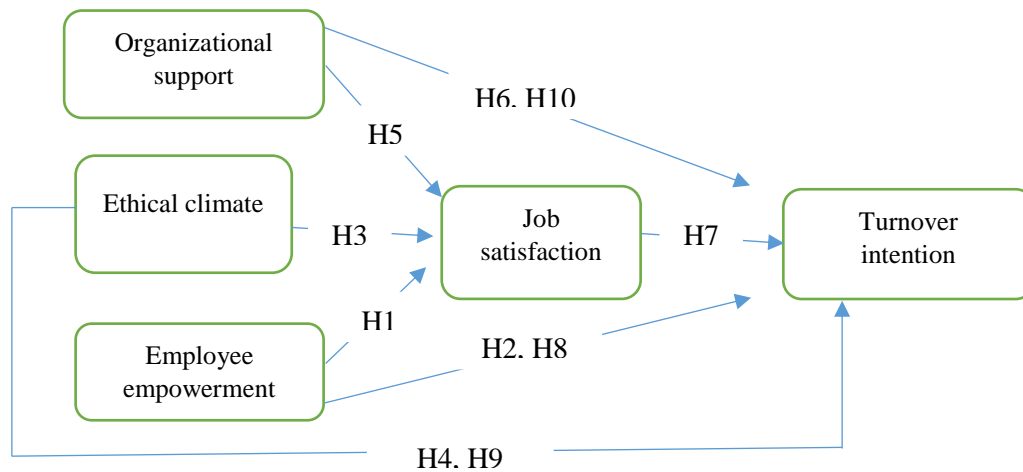

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Methodology

The purpose of this research is analyzing the influence of selected work-related factors (employee empowerment, ethical climate, and organizational support) on employee job satisfaction and turnover intention. The design of this study is descriptive-exploratory research, which is based on self-reported questionnaires. In the present study, a quantitative research procedure is developed to collect and analyze data. In this section, more details on measurement scales, data collection method, and data analysis method is provided.

Measurement scales

In this research, employee empowerment is measured by ten questions extracted from Idris et al. (2018) that assess psychological empowerment. Organizational support was measured by six questions based on Cheng et al. (2013) and Ganji and Kafashpor (2016). The questions measuring ethical climate were derived from Olayiwola (2016). Job satisfaction included four questions obtained from Ahanchian and Ganji (2017), Ganji and Johnson (2020) and Cheng et al. (2013) questionnaires. Finally, the construct of turnover intention (TI) was measured by

three questions derived from Cheng et al. (2013), Ganji and Ahanchian (2016), and Ganji and Ahanchian (2016). Table 1 provides details about the number of questions and the source of each construct.

Table 1. Variables and the Sources of Measures

Variable	Questions	Sources
Employee empowerment (EE)	1-10	Idris et al., (2018)
Organizational support (OS)	11-16	Cheng et al., (2013); Ganji and Kafashpor, (2016)
Ethical climate (EC)	17-23	Olayiwola (2016)
Job satisfaction (JS)	24-27	Ahanchian and Ganji (2017); Ganji and Johnson (2020); Cheng et al., (2013)
Turnover intention (TI)	28-30	Cheng et al., (2013); Ganji et al., (2016); Ganji and Ahanchian (2016)

Data Collection

The research population of the current research is the staff of one of the major universities in Iran located in Mashhad city. The population size is 480, provided by the university authorities. The sample size was estimated by Cochran Formula (N=480, d=0.05, P=Q=0.5) as 213 individuals. The stratified random sampling method was used to select the respondents. The list of employees provided by the university was categorized into eleven distinct groups. Out of the 280 questionnaires distributed to employees at the university, 243 participants replied. Of the returned questionnaires, 28 were not completed. Therefore, the final sample comprised of 215 respondents, showing a satisfactory response rate of 76%. The population and sample size data are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Categories, Population and Sample Size

Categories	Population	Sample size
The administrative office	52	23
Literature faculty	34	15
Theology faculty	37	18
Faculty of Engineering	56	25
School of Architecture	31	14
School of Agriculture	34	15
Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	41	18
School of Psychology	35	16
Faculty of Physical Education	37	17
Collage of science	55	24
Others	68	30
Sum	480	215

Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire at their preferred place and time, then come back with it directly to the researcher within the next 3 days. The respondents' characteristics are provided in Table 3.

According to Table 2, most of the respondents were males, which is consistent with the characteristics of the population (male=310, female=170). Moreover, 66 % of the participants were between 25-45 years old. With regard to the education trait, most of the participants had a bachelor's (41%) or master's degree (32%). Most of the participants had 10-15 years of experience.

Table 3. Respondents' Characteristics

Respondents Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	74	34%
	Male	141	66%
Age	Younger than 25	7	3%
	25-35 years	69	32%
	35-45 years	73	34%
	More than 46	66	31%
Education	High school and diploma	11	5%
	Bachelor	88	41%
	Master	70	32%
	Ph.D.	46	22%
Experience	Less than 5 years	58	27%
	5-10 years	72	33%
	10-15 years	53	25%
	More than 15 years	32	15%
Sum		215	100%

Data Analysis Method

The partial least squares (PLS) approach was employed for analyzing the data. This approach is a variance-based structural equation modeling method (; Tenenhaus et al., 2005). Warp PLS 4 software was employed to examine the measurement and structural models. SPSS software was also used to calculate descriptive statistics as well as the Cronbach's Alpha.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the data including the minimum and maximum scores, mean, and standard deviation values is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perceive Organizational Support (POS)	215	2.31	4.80	3.712	0.542
Employee Empowerment (EE)	215	2.23	5	3.658	0.563
Ethical Climate (EC)	215	2.46	4.68	3.492	0.716
Job Satisfaction (JS)	215	2.20	4.81	3.760	0.645
Turnover Intention (TI)	215	2.14	4.50	2.315	0.508

Among all the antecedent variables, ethical climate had the lowest mean of 3.492, and job satisfaction had the highest mean at 3.760. This means that ethical climate including dimensions of caring, rules, law and codes, and instrumental ethical climate was in an appropriate state but it should be improved by the university as it is lower than other components. The correlations between variables is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The Correlation Between Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1-Employee empowerment (EE)	-			
2-Ethical climate (EC)	0.857[**]	-		
3-Preceived organizational support (POS)	0.812[**]	0.908[**]	-	
4-Job satisfaction (JS)	0.816[**]	0.729[**]	0.827[**]	-
5-Turnover intention (TI)	-0.120	-0.694[**]	-0.607[**]	-0.805[**]

Notes: Correlation is significant at the *0.05 and * *0.01 levels (two-tailed)

According to Table 5, the correlation between employee empowerment and turnover intention is not significant. All of the other variables of the model are correlated with each other at the 0.01% significance level.

Validity and Reliability

To measure the fitness of the measurement model, factor loadings were calculated using Warp PLS 4. The results are provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Reliability and Validity

Variable	Item	Factor Loading
Employee empowerment (EE)	1. I'm sure about my competencies in work.	0.872
	2. I have possessed the necessary expertise related to my job.	0.793
	3. My supervisor suggests methods and technics to help me for better performance.	0.820
	4. I'm free to employ any methods and procedures to improve my performance.	0.726
	5. The university allows me to correct job-related problems.	0.845
	6. The university encourages me to use my creativity to solve my problems.	0.739
	7. I feel a sort of independency over employing a variety of ways to improve my job.	0.716
	8. I can address my job-related problems without the permission of my managers.	0.910
	9. The university allows me to do my job the way I find it productive.	0.846
	10. While doing my job, I am allowed to perform autonomously.	0.837
Organizational support (OS)	The university that I work for	
	11. supports me when I need an individual assist.	0.822
	12. congratulates me for my advancement.	0.744
	13. has minor attention to me (reverse code).	0.761
	14. cares about my welfare.	0.719
	15. values my efforts for its flourishing.	0.683
	16. highly respect values and beliefs.	0.752
Ethical climate (EC)	17. The university has a formal and written ethical code.	0.845
	18. The university enforces ethical codes strictly.	0.862
	19. The university demonstrate some policies for ethical behavior.	0.754
	20. The university strictly dictates policies in ethical behaviors.	0.883
	21. In university, unethical activities are not tolerated.	0.712
	22. If one of the university employees is detected to have participated in an unethical behavior for her/his self-interest, she or he will be unhesitatingly blamed.	0.728
	23. If a staff member in my university is detected to have participated in unethical behavior for organizational benefits, she or he will be immediately blamed.	0.836
Job satisfaction (JS)	24. generally, I am not satisfied with my job (reverse code).	0.683
	25. I love my work.	0.814
	26. I am convenient in my work.	0.827
	27. I am pleased with my job.	0.634
Turnover Intention (TI)	28. I want to move to another university.	0.819
	29. I expect to quit the university in the years to come.	0.747
	30. I will move to a new university soon.	0.775

Based on Table 6, factor loadings of all variables were above 0.6 which met the suitable range (Barclay et al., 1995). Cronbach's α, Composite reliability, and the average variance extracted (AVE) values are provided in Table 7.

Table 7. Reliability and Validity Test

Variables	Cronbach's α	Composite reliability	AVE
1-Employee empowerment (EE)	0.872	0.716	0.625
2-Ethical climate (EC)	0.729	0.823	0.540
3-Preceived organizational support (POS)	0.820	0.847	0.662
4-Job satisfaction (JS)	0.755	0.834	0.649
5-Turnover intention (TI)	0.712	0.759	0.518

Moreover, Cronbach's α values for all variables were above 0.7 and so satisfy the criterion of internal reliability. In addition, all variables' composite reliabilities were more than 0.7, which shows the strong reliability criteria proposed by Chin and Gopal (1995). AVE values of all variables were above 0.5, showing the appropriate model discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

As all scales are administered by the self-report method, to assure that no common method bias existed in the research, we used a full collinearity test frequently used in covariance-based SEM referred to as the common method bias test (Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Kock (2015) proposed that if all VIFs on account of a full collinearity test are similar to or below 3.3, the model could be deemed without common method bias. Accordingly, the VIF values for EE (VIF=1.335), POS (VIF=1.457), EC (VIF=1.170), JS (VIF=2.448), and TI (VIF=2.055) were less than 3.3, showing that the model is free of common method bias.

Hypotheses Testing

This study intended to propose and test a research model (Figure 1) that evaluated the relationship between employee empowerment (EE), perceived organizational support (POS), ethical climate (EC), job satisfaction (JS), and turnover intention (TI). For testing the model, Warp PLS4 was used, the results of which are shown in Figure 2.
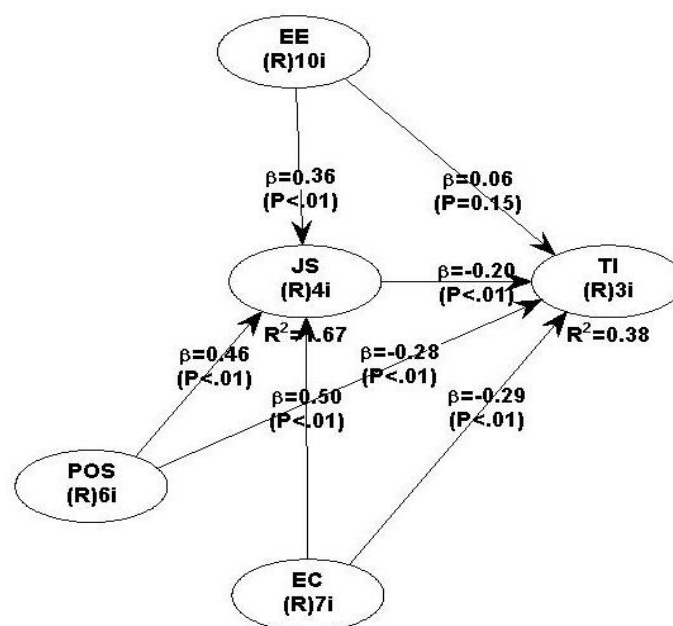

Figure 2. Research Structural Model

According to Figure 2, although the impact of employee empowerment on job satisfaction (H1) is supported (β=0.36, P<0.01), employee empowerment does not predict turnover intention directly (H2). Moreover, ethical climate has a significant effect on job satisfaction (β=0.50, P<0.01), and turnover intention (β=-0.29, P<0.01), supporting H3 and H4. In addition, the impact of perceived organizational support on job satisfaction (β=0.46, P<0.01), and turnover intention (β=-0.28, P<0.01) was confirmed (H5, H6). Finally, the negative impact of job satisfaction on turnover intention (H7) was supported (β=-0.20, P<0.01).

Indirect Effect

To test the mediating effect of job satisfaction, indirect effects were calcualed using Warp pls4. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Indirect Effect of Independent Variables on Turnover Intention

Hypothesis	β	P-value	Result
H8 : Empowerment->job satisfaction->turnover intention	-0.07	0.482	Unsupported
H9: Ethical climate-> job satisfaction-> turnover intention	-0.10	P<0.01	Supported
H10: perceived organizational support->job satisfaction-> turnover intention	-0.09	P<0.01	Supported

Based on Table 8, the mediation impact of job satisfaction on the relationship between ethical climate (β=0.10, P<0.01) and perceived organizational support (β=0.09, P<0.01) are significant. However, employee empowerment has no indirect impact on turnover intention (β=0.36, P=0.482). In fact, this effect is not considerable (H8).

Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of the current study was to investigate the effect of employee empowerment, ethical climate, and organizational support on turnover intention, and to examine the mediating role of job satisfaction in this regard. To support the obtained results, interviews with ten of the respondents were performed. They were asked to explain their attitude with regard to our variables, and the reasons behind each of the obtained results.

According to the results, although the first hypothesis is supported, which means that employee empowerment can predict job satisfaction positively, the direct impact of employee empowerment on turnover intention is not confirmed (H2). This result implies that the greater the extent of employee empowerment, the greater the level of job satisfaction in the university. This finding is similar to the findings of Chinomona et al. (2017) and Yuliandi (2019), which show employee empowerment can predict job satisfaction positively. The interview results also support these results. For example, one of employees said, *"I think working in this university makes me more confident in doing my tasks. Therefore, I am happy because I can do most of my tasks by myself without asking my manager's instructions."* Most of the interviewees (6 of 10 interviewees) believed that the employee empowerment could not determine their turnover intention, as they thought they could not find better jobs out of university.

The third hypothesis suggested that ethical climate positively influences employee job satisfaction, which was supported. Ahanchian and Ganji (2017) and Ganji and Ahanchian (2016) confirmed the effect of ethical context on job satisfaction. Chinomona et al. (2017) and Olayiwola (2016) also explain that ethical climate can predict job satisfaction positively. The fourth hypothesis was supported, which means ethical climate negatively influences employee turnover intention. Likewise, Ganji and Ahanchian (2016) show that ethical context predicts

turnover intention negatively. In this regard, interviewees believe that the ethical codes in universities are not clear. Moreover, there is not any safe shelter for those who report unethical behaviors, as they always face other employees' anger. Regardless of these negative points, they thought that the university valued ethical climate more than other organizations, so they were satisfied with their job and did not like to quick their job.

The next hypothesis is also supported (H5), showing that perceived organizational support influences job satisfaction positively, which is similar to the findings of Cheng et al. (2013) and Chinomona et al. (2017). Finally, results show that the H6 is also confirmed, meaning that perceived organizational support influences turnover intention negatively, which has been previously confirmed by Ganji and Kafashpor (2016) and Rigter (2017). Accordingly, one of interviewees said, "The organization is so supportive to its employees in terms of financial and non-financial support, so the most of our employees like the university and their job and aim to maintain their jobs."

Consequently, it is predictable that for these high educated employees, the low level of key organizational and individual factors including ethical climate, organizational support, and job satisfaction can lead to high level of turnover intention.

H7, which states that job satisfaction negatively influences turnover intention, was also supported. Previous research such as Lee et al. (2019), Olayiwola (2016), Zamanan et al. (2020), and Ganji and Johnson (2020) support this finding. Oluwaseun (2016) also show that job satisfaction positively influences intention to stay in the organization. Although the mediation impact of job satisfaction on the relation between employee empowerment and turnover intention was not supported (H8), job satisfaction mediates the impact of ethical climate and perceived organizational support and turnover intention (H9, H10).

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The research has both theoretical and practical implications. Relying on the Hertzberg's motivational theory, this research addressed the effect of three motivational factors including ethical climate, employee empowerment, and organizational support on job satisfaction. This article developed social exchange theory by investigating the effect of organizational factors such as ethical culture of organization, employee empowerment, and organizational support on employee job satisfaction and turnover intention. The findings of this research also could be further coated into the service-profit chain (SPC) model suggested by Heskett et al. (1994), indicating that worker satisfaction affects staff maintenance and efficiency and consequently has a great effect on the quality of services. Current study deepens this framework by suggesting that ethical climate, employee empowerment, and perceived organizational support can lead to increased job satisfaction and decreased turnover intention. Moreover, the research gaps in the literature were addressed in the present research through analyzing the mediating role of job satisfaction in the impact of ethical climate, employee empowerment, and organizational support on turnover intention.

In practice, employee empowerment, ethical climate, and perceived organizational support can predict job satisfaction and consequently employee turnover intention. To improve the feeling of organizational support, the universities should provide financial and non-financial benefits to their staff, listen to their voice, paying attention to their training, support them, solve their complains, and defend their rights. To improve the psychological capital of employees, mangers of the university should always ask for suggestions from their employees about their tasks and organizational policies, and try to create the sense of being influential in employees. University authorities also should encourage their employees to participate in training courses to increase their autonomy in decision-making. In this regard, the time wasted

for receiving managerial instruction will be decreased, increasing the sense of responsibility among employees. Ethical climate has the lowest average among all variables; therefore, to improve the ethical culture of the university, authorities should conduct clear and ethical codes, rules, and regulations, and try to provide a caring and supporting environment in organization.

Limitations and Further Research Directions

This research has several limitations which create opportunities for further research. First, managerial and non-managerial staff were included in this study as the research population, while their behavior may be different. Future research could evaluate the two groups separately and compare the results. Moreover, the data was collected from one Iranian university. It is suggested for further research to test the model in other organizations with larger samples to increase result generalizability. Lastly, the moderating effects in this study were not addressed. Some recommended moderating variables like inclusion climate and top management commitment can be considered by other researchers.

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