

The Impact of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Job Satisfaction on Turnover Intentions: A Moderating Effect of Public and Private Sector Employees

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Abstract: The operational efficiency in China's private and public sectors presents significant differences that managers are unaware of, leading to increased turnover intentions. The current research covers the impacts of intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction on turnover intentions within the Chinese public sector. This research investigates the correlation between job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions in the Chinese public and private sectors. Data were gathered via questionnaires distributed to employees from multiple public and private enterprises and institutions. The findings indicate clear differences between employees in the public and private sectors regarding the influence of job satisfaction on intentions to turnover. Specifically, Chinese public employees show less extrinsic job satisfaction and less desire to quit than employees employed in the private sector. Moreover, compared to employees in the private sector, those working in the public sector have a direct but insignificant negative relationship between extrinsic job satisfaction and turnover intentions. To improve employee motivation, it is recommended that public-sector managers prioritize enhancing extrinsic job factors and consider reallocating dissatisfied employees to more suitable roles. Furthermore, managers should evaluate whether their organization's turnover rate is overly high, as it will deteriorate productivity and efficiency.

Keywords: *Intrinsic Job Satisfaction, Extrinsic Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intention, Public Sector, Private Sector.*

1. Introduction

In organizational management, understanding employees' job satisfaction and its relationship with turnover intentions is critical to improving organizational efficiency and performance. This is especially true for the public and private sectors, which play integral roles in economic and social development. Economic studies have shown that the public sector is often lower than the private sector regarding operational efficiency and productivity (Taylor, 1911), which is also the case in many economies (Krugman, 2009). There are restructuring and innovation strategies to address inefficiencies in the public sector (Porter, 2015). However, public areas like public education and government agencies cannot be privatized, so other methods must be explored.

Job satisfaction is significant to organizational productivity. Although job satisfaction at the individual level is not necessarily linked to productivity, lower job satisfaction is often accompanied by higher rates of absenteeism and turnover, affecting organizational productivity (Mayo, 1933). Conversely, high job satisfaction helps to reduce absenteeism and turnover rates, increase organizational citizenship behavior and enhance overall organizational performance. It has been shown that public sector employees have lower job satisfaction compared to private sector employees, possibly because public sector roles require more motivational potential (Maslow, 1943).

In addition, one reason for lower overall productivity in the public sector is that public-sector employees value job security more than private-sector workers (Friedman, 1962). While low turnover rates can reduce costs associated with recruitment, selection, and training and increase employee loyalty and job commitment (Drucker, 1999), excessively low turnover rates can disrupt established patterns of interaction, affect coordination, and lead to distraction from non-executive behaviors, which can inhibit organizational performance (Christensen, 2013). Meanwhile, turnover intention is negatively related to job satisfaction (Schumpeter, 2018).

However, previous studies have not yet analyzed in-depth the turnover intentions of employees in the public and private sectors, especially the situation where the link between job satisfaction and turnover is influenced

by the strong need for job security among civil servants. Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively examine the intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction elements affecting employees in these two sectors and to compare the differences between the public and private sectors in this regard, which will help to gain insights into the characteristics of the two sectors in terms of human resource management and to provide targeted recommendations for improving organizational effectiveness.

From a theoretical basis, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory suggests that job satisfaction is related to the degree to which employees satisfy a variety of needs and that intrinsic job satisfaction may be related to the need for self - self-actualization, and extrinsic job satisfaction may be related to physiological and safety needs, among other things, and that job satisfaction decreases when the needs are not met, which in turn affects the intention to leave the job. Herzberg's two-factor theory also provides support, that health factors are similar to extrinsic job satisfaction factors, and motivational factors are similar to intrinsic job satisfaction factors, lack of health factors leads to employee dissatisfaction, and satisfaction of motivational factors increases job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1959), and this study analyzes the correlations between public and private sector employees based on these theories.

China is a large developing country with unique national conditions, and its public sector and private sector development patterns are different from those of other countries. The public sector plays a dominant and leading role in economic and social development, such as public education and governmental organizations that are irreplaceable in promoting social equity and safeguarding people's livelihood. China's private sector is growing rapidly and its share in the national economy is increasing. Studying China's public and private sectors can reflect the characteristics of employees' job satisfaction and turnover intention during rapid development and transformation, which is of sample significance for understanding human resource management in emerging economies. At the same time, traditional Chinese culture, such as the concept of collectivism, may influence employees' attitudes toward job satisfaction and turnover intentions, and the study of the Chinese context can help to further enrich the exploration of the role of related factors in the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

2. Literature Review

Job Satisfaction Levels in Public and Private Sector Employees: In the field of Organizational Behavior, an in-depth exploration of the relationship between employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions, especially the differences in different sectors (public and private sectors) as well as the moderating effects, is important for understanding employee behavior and organizational management. This review will describe the studies related to intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction and their links with turnover intentions in the public and private sectors, respectively, and formulate corresponding hypotheses based on these studies.

Intrinsic job satisfaction focuses primarily on the satisfaction derived from the characteristics of the job itself. Factors such as job challenge, autonomy, opportunities for personal growth, and task variety are widely recognized as key factors influencing intrinsic job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). When employees can fully utilize their abilities at work and feel the meaning and value of their work, intrinsic job satisfaction will increase accordingly.

In terms of job tasks and responsibilities, public sector jobs often have a relatively clear and stable task framework. For example, in the field of public education, teachers' teaching tasks are standardized to a certain extent and remain relatively stable over a long period. This stability allows employees to delve deeper into the business and gain satisfaction from the work itself by improving their expertise in a particular field as they gain experience (Buelens & Van den Broeck, 2007). In the public sector, the work is mostly related to public services, and employees can contribute directly or indirectly to the public interest (Rainey, 1983). In terms of organizational culture and work environment, the public sector usually promotes an organizational culture of teamwork, fairness, and service to the public. In this culture, employees work closely with each other, and interpersonal relationships are relatively harmonious. For example, in the project cooperation of government departments, employees from different departments work together to complete the public affairs. This positive atmosphere of cooperation and fair organizational environment is conducive to the development of employees' talents, which in turn enhances intrinsic job satisfaction (Perry & Wise, 1990). The private sector is in a highly

competitive market environment, where innovation becomes the key to business survival and growth. This leads to more opportunities for employees to be involved in innovative projects. For employees who are creative and seek challenges, such innovative work can lead to higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction (Amabile, 1996). However, market competition also leads to the need for private firms to constantly adapt their business orientation and work tasks to market changes. This may expose employees to frequent job adjustments and intense work demands. For firms to capture market share, employees may need to complete multiple projects in a short period and work under high pressure, which may reduce intrinsic job satisfaction to some extent (Karasek, 1979). Factors such as stable work assignments in the public sector, a sense of mission in public service, and a harmonious organizational culture provide good conditions for employees to derive satisfaction from the work itself, whereas in the private sector, although there are opportunities for innovation, job adjustments and high stress brought about by competitive pressures may weaken intrinsic job satisfaction. Based on the above synthesis of research on intrinsic job satisfaction in the public and private sectors, the hypothesis can be formulated:

H1: Employees in the public sector experience higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction compared to employees in the private sector.

Extrinsic job satisfaction is mainly related to the external conditions of the job, including compensation package, working environment, and career development opportunities (Locke, 1976). These external factors have a direct impact on how employees feel about their jobs as a whole.

Compensation systems in the public sector are usually stable, with pay adjustments based on fixed grades and seniority. Although benefits, such as pensions and health insurance, are relatively well-developed, overall pay levels tend to be uncompetitive in comparison with the private sector (Baldwin, 1990). In the case of civil servants, for example, salary increases are relatively fixed and subject to strict policy constraints, which may lead to lower extrinsic job satisfaction among employees in terms of pay (Perry, 1997). Promotion channels in the public sector generally follow a strict hierarchy and seniority requirements. Employees are often promoted over a long period and under specific conditions, with relatively limited opportunities for career development. For example, in the government sector, promotion from junior staff to management requires years of accumulation and strict appraisal, and this single mode of promotion may affect employees' extrinsic job satisfaction (Light, 1995). The private sector usually adopts a more flexible compensation system to attract and retain talent. In addition to basic salary, there are incentives such as performance bonuses and stock options. For example, in financial firms, employees' performance bonuses may account for a large percentage of their total income, and this kind of pay incentive based on employees' performance can effectively increase employees' extrinsic job satisfaction (Lawler, 1971). However, pay gaps in the private sector can be large, and different employees in the same department may have very different pay due to performance differences. This pay gap may create a sense of unfairness among some employees, thus reducing extrinsic job satisfaction to some extent (Adams, 1965). Private companies can offer more diverse career development opportunities due to their flexible business model. Employees can expand their careers through cross-functional promotions and participation in internationalization projects. For example, large multinational organizations provide employees with opportunities to work and advance overseas, which can help increase employees' extrinsic job satisfaction (Sonnenfeld & Peiperl, 1988). While the public sector has uncompetitive salaries and a single promotion channel, the private sector's flexible compensation system and diverse career development opportunities provide employees with more possibilities to enhance extrinsic job satisfaction. Based on the analysis of extrinsic job satisfaction in the public sector and private sector, the hypothesis can be formulated:

H2: Public sector employees have lower levels of extrinsic job satisfaction compared to private sector employees.

Comparison of Turnover Intentions between Public and Private Employees: Turnover intention refers to an individual's tendency to leave their current organization for more favorable employment opportunities. (Adams & White, 2021). Many empirical studies show that public sector employees have a higher need and stronger desire for job security than private sector employees (Miller & Johnson, 1978; Brown & Green, 2022)). Such increased attention on job security generally translates to decreased turnover within the public sector, as public workers often seek employment for the long haul. Therefore, they more often develop relational contracts, which are based on mutual trust and commitment, with their respective employers, further developing stability in the employment relationship, and leading to lower turnover intentions (Smith &

Thompson, 2023). Previous research suggests that public-sector employees, on average, have lower turnover intentions than private-sector workers, such as financial officers and lawyers, whose occupational groups experience more significant employee turnover (Jones & Davis, 1965). This difference is due to the substantial difference in these sectors' job security and career paths. For example, private-sector financial officers and lawyers often operate in competitive environments where moving from one job to another is essential for career advancement, meaning they can change organizations more frequently.

Additionally, work based on the public and private sectors in Jordan demonstrated that workers in the private sector were significantly more likely to search for alternative job opportunities and were less committed to their employers than public sector workers (Wilson & Taylor, 2023). The private sector offers comparatively lower job security. Therefore, workers are exploring better careers and pay deals, reflected in this trend. Likewise, public-sector workers, who generally possess better job security and permanence, exhibit a higher degree of loyalty and organizational commitment than their private counterparts, which leads to lower turnover intentions. Hence, based on the results of our findings about the psychological needs and job security of public sector employees, the hypothesis is presented as:

H3: Public sector employees have a lower turnover intention compared to those in the private sector.

The public sector is oriented to the public interest, and the results of its work are mainly reflected in the provision of public services and the improvement of social welfare. The private sector, on the other hand, is profit-oriented and is more concerned with market share, economic efficiency, and so on. This difference in goal orientation affects employees' expectations and evaluations of their work. For example, public sector employees may be more focused on the impact of their work on society, whereas private sector employees are more focused on the impact of their work on their personal financial gain and career development, which in turn affects the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to leave (Rainey, 1983). The management model in the public sector is usually more hierarchical and standardized, with a relatively complex decision-making process that focuses on the legitimacy and fairness of procedures. The private sector, on the other hand, has a more flexible management model, with faster decision-making and a greater focus on market response. Different management styles will bring different work experiences to employees. In the public sector, employees may need to follow more rules and regulations, while in the private sector, employees may have more autonomy but also face greater risks. This difference moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Light, 1995). In the public sector, the effect of intrinsic job satisfaction on turnover intentions may be relatively weak due to factors such as job stability and a sense of social value. For example, even if a public sector employee is less satisfied with the challenge and autonomy of his job, he may not readily develop an intention to leave considering the stability of his job and his contribution to society. In the private sector, on the other hand, employees rely more on intrinsic job satisfaction in deciding whether to leave their jobs, as they look more to the job itself for value and development opportunities. Based on this, the hypothesis can be formulated:

H4: Employees in the public sector show a weaker negative relationship between intrinsic job satisfaction and the tendency to leave the job compared to employees in the private sector.

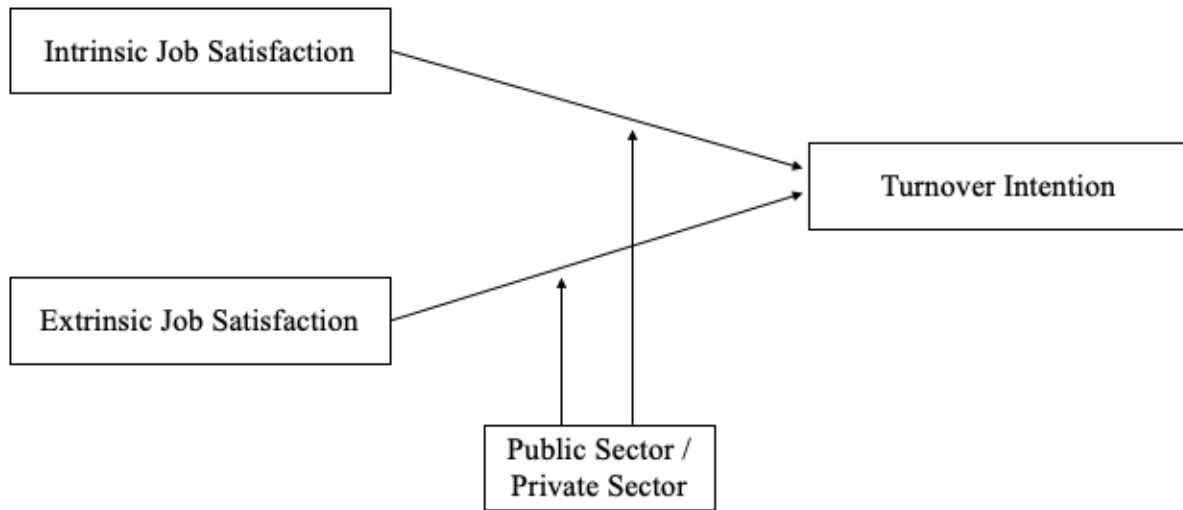
Similarly, in the public sector, factors such as job stability have a strong inhibitory effect on turnover intention, and extrinsic job satisfaction (e.g., pay, promotion opportunities, etc.) has a relatively small effect on turnover intention. For example, public sector employees may not leave their jobs easily due to job stability even if they are not satisfied with their pay. In the private sector, on the other hand, the effect of extrinsic job satisfaction on turnover intention is more significant, and employees may choose to leave their jobs because of better pay or career development opportunities. Therefore, the hypothesis can be formulated:

H5: Employees in the public sector show a weaker negative relationship between extrinsic job satisfaction and the propensity to leave their jobs than employees in the private sector.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study.

Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework



3. Method

Research Design: This study's sample comprised employees from various organizations in China in the two sectors. Given the country's substantial number of public and private sector employees, random sampling was not feasible. Data were gathered from employees across a range of public and private organizations to enhance the sample's representativeness. In China, public enterprises span several sectors, including energy, telecommunications, and transportation (Porter, 2015). Meanwhile, private sector employees predominantly work in manufacturing, services, technology, and construction industries. Consequently, the sample was drawn from these critical industries. Participants' demographic information was collected, followed by the intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction and turnover intention of employees from each sector.

Participants/Sample: This study's sample comprised employees from various public and private organizations in China. Given the country's substantial number of public and private sector employees, random sampling was not feasible. Data were gathered from employees across a range of public and private organizations to enhance the sample's representativeness. In China, public enterprises span several sectors, including energy, telecommunications, and transportation (Christensen, 2023). Meanwhile, private sector employees predominantly work in manufacturing, services, technology, and construction industries. Consequently, the sample was drawn from these critical industries.

Instruments: Intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction was assessed via 5-point Likert and turnover intentions similarly, while control variables were measured, including age, gender, education, career tenure, and level of position. The reliability of the obtained data was checked using factor analysis. Hypotheses were then tested using T-tests and hierarchical regression analyses, which were carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics software.

Procedure: A factor analysis was conducted to evaluate the construct validity of the variables on work satisfaction and intention to leave. The first three hypotheses were examined with a T-test, while the fourth and fifth hypotheses were assessed using a hierarchical regression analysis. To examine Hypotheses 4 and 5, we utilized a theoretical model which used moderation analysis. This model also proves the relationship between two variables (intrinsic job satisfaction and turnover intention for Hypothesis 4 and extrinsic job satisfaction and turnover intention for Hypothesis 5) through a third variable, which in the case of this article is either public or private sector employees.

Ethical Considerations: Before participants filled in the questionnaires, participants were given a consent form to confirm their willingness to participate in the study, and the purpose and processes involved in the data analysis were clearly stated within the consent form. To ensure the anonymity and privacy of participants, the names and personal information were not collected, and participants held the right to withdraw from the questionnaire. Each participant had signed the consent form before starting the questionnaire.

4. Results

Demographic Information of Participants: 500 questionnaires were distributed to public-sector employees and 500 to private-sector employees. Of these, 395 responses were collected from the public sector, yielding a response rate of 79%. However, 26 incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the analysis. Three hundred ten responses were collected from the private sector, yielding a response rate of 62%, but 35 incomplete questionnaires were also excluded. This resulted in 644 valid responses, reflecting an overall response rate of 64.4%.

The survey revealed an approximately equal gender distribution among respondents from both private and public sectors. Among private-sector employees, the largest age group was 31–35 years, representing 42.9% of the respondents, whereas public-sector employees were predominantly in the 46–50 age bracket, accounting for 34.1%. Regarding marital status, over half (53.6%) of private-sector respondents were single, while most public-sector employees (87.5%) were married. Regarding educational attainment, 66.3% of public-sector employees held a university degree or higher, compared to 54.2% of private-sector respondents. Career tenure also varied significantly: 35.2% of public-sector employees had more than 30 years of service, while in the private sector, the highest proportion (21.6%) had worked for 4–5 years. The distribution of job levels within the public sector showed that 40.2% were in low-level positions, 52.1% in mid-level, and 7.7% in high-level roles. In contrast, private-sector respondents were distributed as follows: 32.4% in low-level positions, 48% in mid-level, and 19.6% in high-level roles.

Validity and Reliability of Variables: Intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction were identified as the two distinct components of job satisfaction. The turnover intention was discovered to be dependent on just one component. The reliability analysis revealed an adequate internal consistency for every measurement, with extrinsic satisfaction having the highest Cronbach's α coefficient at 0.89, intrinsic satisfaction at 0.87, and turnover intention at 0.88.

Hypothesis Testing: A T-test was used to examine Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Age, gender, education level, job tenure, and position rank were all considered in the regression model, and the moderating variable was the employment sector (public vs. private). On the other hand, Hypotheses 4 and 5 were investigated using a moderation analysis.

The analysis first evaluated whether intrinsic work satisfaction significantly influenced turnover intention to support Hypothesis 4, which asserts that the negative association between intrinsic job satisfaction and intention to turnover is less pronounced in the public sector. Assuming that this relationship was significant, the next test will be conducted to assess whether the interaction between intrinsic job satisfaction and the employment sector was statistically significant. A positive interaction between intrinsic job satisfaction and the employment sector would support Hypothesis 4, which indicates that the inverse association of intrinsic satisfaction on turnover intention is more minor in magnitude for public sector workers.

The mean, standard deviation, and correlations for each measured variable are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Only statistically significant correlations were included in the final analysis to ensure the precision and reliability of the results. As seen in Table 1 and Table 2 data, it is clear that age can predict intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction for private employees but only differentially affect employees of public sectors with their extrinsic job satisfaction. Among private employees, only intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction each correlated positively with gender. Education level was negatively associated with extrinsic satisfaction for public employees, but for private workers, it was positively associated with both intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction. In public employees, job tenure was significantly and positively related to intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction. In addition, position level was positively associated with extrinsic satisfaction for public employees and intrinsic satisfaction for private employees. As predicted, employee turnover intention in both sectors was inversely connected with intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation for Public Employees

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	4.98	1.71	-						
2. Gender	0.52	0.46	0.22***	-					
3. Education	2.64	1.26	-0.05	-0.04	-				
4. Job Tenure	5.22	2.03	0.73**	0.19*	-0.61***	-			
5. Position Level	1.89	0.96	-0.05	0.17*	0.08	0.13	-		
6. Intrinsic Job Satisfaction	3.65	0.52	0.06	0.04	0.28***	-0.16*	0.15+	-	
7. Extrinsic Job Satisfaction	3.05	0.71	0.12**	0.10	-0.11*	0.19**	0.19*	0.51*	
8. Turnover Intention	1.69	0.77	-0.08	-0.05	-0.19***	0.11	-	0.14+	-0.46**
									-0.17*

n = 369.

p<0.10; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation for Private Employees

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	2.59	1.23	-						
2. Gender	0.47	0.47	0.29**	-					
3. Education	2.01	1.13	0.06	0.38**	-				
4. Job Tenure	3.29	2.03	0.81**	-0.06	-0.31***	-			
5. Position Level	2.76	0.92	0.51***	0.59***	0.41***	0.27**	-		
6. Intrinsic Job Satisfaction	3.41	0.64	0.24**	0.24***	0.16**	0.12+	0.31***	-	
7. Extrinsic Job Satisfaction	3.37	0.72	0.10+	0.21**	0.14*	0.03	0.09	0.79**	
8. Turnover Intention	2.28	1.01	-0.07	-0.07	-0.08	-0.07	-0.08	-0.58***	-0.56***

n = 275.

p<0.10; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Differences in Intrinsic and Extrinsic Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention between Public and Private Sectors: According to an investigation of their turnover intentions, public employees also showed far lower intentions of leaving their positions than private employees ($t = -6.50, p < 0.001$). This significant difference corroborates Hypothesis 3, which suggested that turnover intention would be lower among public-sector employees. Taken together, the results reinforce the hypothesized relationships and underscore the variations in job satisfaction and turnover intention across sectors.

Table 3: T-Test on the Means of Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention between Public and Private Employees

Variable	Public Employee Mean	Private Employee Mean	t
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction	3.65	3.41	3.87***
Extrinsic Job Satisfaction	3.05	3.37	-3.41***
Turnover Intention	1.69	2.28	-6.50***

public employees n = 369, private employees n = 275

***p<0.001

The Moderating Impact of Sector on the Relationship between Satisfaction and Turnover: With turnover intention as the dependent variable, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed to assess Hypotheses 4 and 5. This analysis proceeded in three stages. Age, gender, education, job tenure, and position level were the control variables that were first added to the regression model to create Model A. In the second stage, sector (public vs. private), along with intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, were added to the model, yielding Model

B. Finally, in the third stage, interaction terms between sector and intrinsic satisfaction, as well as between industry and extrinsic satisfaction, were incorporated, resulting in Model C.

According to Table 4, Model A shows that the control variables explained 6% of the variance in the intention to leave a job, with older employees having a reduced tendency to do so ($b = -0.24, p < 0.01$). In Model B, the inclusion of sector, intrinsic satisfaction, and extrinsic satisfaction increased the model's explanatory power to 26%. The results demonstrate that both industry and levels of job satisfaction significantly influenced turnover intention. Employees who were employed in the public sector ($b = -0.35, p < 0.01$) and those who had higher intrinsic satisfaction ($b = -0.41, p < 0.05$) or extrinsic satisfaction ($b = -0.18, p < 0.001$) showed a lower desire to leave. These findings confirm Hypothesis 3, which posited that turnover intention would be lower among public-sector employees.

The predictive power of Model C was further increased to 28% through the inclusion of interaction terms between the sector and the satisfaction variables. The correlation between turnover intention and intrinsic satisfaction remained negative ($b = -0.30, p < 0.01$), but there was no statistically significant difference in the interaction between intrinsic satisfaction and sector ($b = -0.18, p > 0.05$). This result shows that employee discontent with intrinsic elements of the job increased the desire to leave the company for both public and private employees, contradicting Hypothesis 4.

In contrast, the study revealed a negative correlation between turnover intention and extrinsic satisfaction ($b = -0.41, p < 0.001$), with a significantly positive interaction identified with the sector ($b = 0.45, p < 0.05$). It indicates that when employees in the public sector were dissatisfied with irrelevant aspects of their positions, they were less inclined to leave than those in the private sector. As a result, Hypothesis 5, which proposed that the sector moderates the correlation between turnover intention and extrinsic satisfaction, was validated.

Table 4: Regression Analysis Predicting Turnover Intention (n = 644)

Independent Variable	Model A	Model B	Model C
Control Variables			
Age	-0.24***	-0.02	-0.02
Gender	0.08	0.09	0.10
Education	-0.09	-0.03	-0.02
Job Tenure	0.08	0.05	0.03
Position Level	0.02	0.04	0.03
Main Effect			
Sector		-0.35**	-0.37***
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction		-0.41*	-0.30**
Extrinsic Job Satisfaction		-0.18***	-0.41***
Interaction Effect			
Sector & Intrinsic Job Satisfaction > Turnover Intention			-0.18
Sector*Extrinsic Job Satisfaction > Turnover Intention			0.45*
Model F	4.89***	16.72***	14.82***
Adjusted R ²	0.06	0.26	0.28
Δ R ²		0.20	0.02
F change		36.23***	5.82**

n = 644

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion of Main Result: Based on the research results, compared to employees in the private sector, public sector employees have significantly higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction but considerably lower levels of extrinsic job satisfaction in the Chinese context. Such discontent with extrinsic factors stems from many problems like low wages, poor quality of work life, poor supervision, or relatedness (Clark & Oswald, 1996). The intrinsic factors of public employment attract more favorable opinions from Chinese public employees, perhaps because they are more motivated to engage in public service provision (Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999). Nevertheless, the discrepancy in extrinsic satisfaction among public employees suggests that their motivation might be more enhanced with changes made to the extrinsic factors that encompass their work environments.

Such strong results provide good empirical evidence for greater job security among public-sector staff. At the same time, public employees differ from private sector employees in terms of extrinsic job satisfaction and turnover intention correlation strength. Turnover intentions among public employees are also significantly lower than those for private sector employees. This result is consistent with the idea that even when unhappy about non-pay-related job characteristics, public employees may feel they can avoid employment turnover because of the stability offered by public-sector jobs.

The only departure from the security argument relates to intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. The results indicated that the type of employment sector needed to moderate the relationship between inherent satisfaction and intention to turnover. Not only does this lack of moderation indicate that public or private sector workers dissatisfied with the nature of their work are as likely to think about leaving. These findings imply that intrinsic aspects of work are valued just as much by public employees as by private sector ones. In conclusion, the food security literature has critical gaps that limit our understanding of the complex nature of food security issues and hinder effective policy and practice. These gaps include inadequate attention to certain issues, insufficient exploration of intersections with other global issues, limited focus on the perspectives and experiences of marginalized groups, a lack of attention to policy implications, and a lack of standardized methods for measuring and assessing food security. Addressing these gaps is crucial for sustainable development, as food security is a fundamental component of global development and has far-reaching implications for social, economic, and environmental well-being. To address these gaps, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners must work together to incorporate diverse perspectives and voices into food security research, prioritize research on understudied issues and intersections with other global issues, strengthen partnerships and collaborations, and improve data collection and analysis methods to better capture the complexity of food security issues? By addressing these critical gaps, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of food security and develop more effective policies and practices that promote food security for all. It is essential to recognize that food security is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires collaborative efforts from various sectors to achieve sustainable solutions. Therefore, it is a call to action for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to work together and prioritize efforts to address these gaps and improve food security globally.

Limitations: This study has some limitations that should be considered. The small sample size should be noted as a significant limitation that would hinder the survey from being generalizable since it was only conducted in one area in China. Such restriction could restrict the generalizability of results in the country in different areas/sectors. Moreover, it does not consider other relevant external factors that have affected employees' employability and turnover decisions, such as social capital, networking, or labor market conditions. Hence, to better understand the intent to leave in the two sectors, the studies should include such characteristics.

Thus, this study deepened the understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction and turnover intention. However, more research is needed to explore factors influencing turnover. Future studies, such as those exploring how interpersonal relationships with coworkers, workplace politics, and organizational culture influence employees to leave, can further add to the factors of employee turnover. Understanding the role of supply-demand in job markets, including economic conditions on employee turnover intentions, allows for an improved understanding of response behavior across sectors and regions.

Future studies can explore how learning and development opportunities affect employee commitment or which retention approach works most effectively in different industries. Getting the right people into your organization may reduce turnover and should be scrutinized further. Exploring how businesses can integrate long-term retention goals into their hiring practices would also be essential.

Future research may also find it interesting to examine the impact of some technological innovations on job satisfaction and turnover intentions. As technology permeates the workplace, it is essential to assess whether changes in job roles and industries positively or negatively influence employee attitudes, such as their satisfaction and retention across the economy.

This study contributed significantly to the field by enhancing our understanding of intrinsic versus extrinsic job satisfaction versus turnover intentions for Chinese employees in public and private sector work contexts. The findings indicate that public employees are less likely than private sector employees to have intentions of turnover. In addition, the external job satisfaction of public employees is negatively related to turnover intentions, and such a relationship shows a weaker relationship than that of employees of the private sector in terms of controlling all the relevant variables. However, even more research is needed to explore these findings in greater depth and provide a fuller explanation of why employees leave.

Implications for Behavioral Science: In addition to these previous findings, this study contributes to the understanding by allowing for better assessments of different hypotheses around lower relative public sector productivity sources. For example, declines in employee job satisfaction and turnover intentions and a weaker link between job satisfaction and turnover intention among public employees could be possible drivers of reduced productivity. The results provide some solutions to help solve these challenges.

We recommend that public sector managers in China study the causes of lower levels of extrinsic satisfaction among their employees. By optimizing the motivation potential of extrinsic factors such as salary, working conditions, and policies, they could have a much higher leverage on overall job satisfaction. By raising these extrinsic motivators, the public sector should then be able to achieve a higher productivity level as its employees will be more engaged and motivated.

Similarly, if excessively low turnover hampers the movement of people within the organization and inhibits the flow of new talent, exploring ways to moderate turnover may be recommended. The rate at which employees come and go from a company is referred to as the turnover rate, which should ideally be in equilibrium, presenting an opportunity for new talent armed with fresh ideas while giving better prospects to existing employees. This means that a certain amount of turnover may increase public sector productivity.

The study also shows that the negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions is weaker among public employees, some of whom may intentionally stay within the organization despite dissatisfaction with their jobs. It could be that the threat of not having a job elsewhere is so significant that it shows reduced productivity levels. Public sector managers should know about their discontent employees who are still working. These employees can then be assisted to enhance their extrinsic satisfaction or transferred to their place of interest and strength. These methods could further enhance satisfaction and, therefore, efficiency in the public sector.

Theoretical Advancements: Our study makes several significant theoretical contributions to the existing literature. It provides a new look at the cross-relationships among Chinese public and private sector employees' intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, as well as turnover intention. The quantitative nature of the research and the use of new statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, t-tests, and regression analyses to a richer perspective on the interplay between these factors.

One of the main contributions of this study is analyzing intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction as a moderator variable with turnover intention. Unlike previous researchers who explored job satisfaction and turnover intention in isolation, this study examines both types of job satisfaction to determine their impact on employees' decisions to stay or leave jobs across sectors. Reducing turnover intention, the findings show that intrinsic job satisfaction is a part of decreased turnover inclination among the public and private sectors. On

the other hand, extrinsic job satisfaction, which captures aspects such as pay, working conditions, and organizational policies, appears to have a more nuanced moderating effect on turnover intention than the public sector.

Through this approach, the study broadens the theoretical perspective of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction functioning as essential determinants of turnover intention. It shows that the differences by sector matter for these relationships. We bridge the gap by showing how different forms of job satisfaction impact employee retention differently in various sectors, providing implications for scholars and practitioners alike.

Conclusion: This research aimed to examine the links between intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction and turnover intentions of public-private sector employees in China. The results reveal that employees working in the public sector are less likely to think of quitting their jobs than private sector employees when unsatisfied with extrinsic factors such as salary, working conditions, and organizational policy. However, on many deeply intrinsic aspects of their jobs, like personal fulfillment, sense of accomplishment, and self-worth, public employees were just as likely to consider leaving as private employees.

As intrinsic job satisfaction plays a significant part in turnover intention, its impact on an increase in the sense of achievement and self-worth significantly aids employees in becoming committed to their jobs. Extrinsic satisfaction, which is related mainly to external stimuli like company policy, compensation packages, and the working environment, is also vital to turnover intention. If these external factors are suitable or in sync with employees' expectations, the chances of employees contemplating resignation increase.

The research concludes by suggesting that public-sector managers in China should pay more attention to intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction factors to prevent turnover intentions. Public sector organizations can address the problem of increasingly leaner staffing and higher levels of job satisfaction across their workforces by creating conditions that nurture relatively different types of internal motivation and providing cumulative external rewards.

Acknowledgment: The authors would like to thank Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Melaka for supporting this article.

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