

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**REWARD SYSTEMS AND
TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG
ACADEMICS IN MALAYSIAN
PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES LISTED
IN THE QS WORLD UNIVERSITY
RANKINGS: THE MEDIATING
ROLE OF CONTINUANCE
COMMITMENT**

YUSUF FARHAN BIN AZMAL

MSc

May 2026

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YUSUF FARHAN BIN AZMAL

Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science (Business Management)

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May 2026

CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS

I certify that a Panel of Examiners has met on 3rd March 2025 to conduct the final examination of Yusuf Farhan Bin Azmal on his Masters of Science thesis entitled “Reward Systems and Turnover Intention among Academics in Malaysian Private Universities Listed in the QS World University Rankings: The Mediating Role of Continuance Commitment” in accordance with Universiti Teknologi MARA Act 1976 (Akta 173). The Panel of Examiner recommends that the student be awarded the relevant degree. The Panel of Examiners was as follows:

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I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

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ABSTRACT

Employee Turnover continues to be a chronic problem in higher education sector even in the increasingly competitive context of Malaysian private universities. Academicians play a key role in the functioning of the institution through their teaching, research and knowledge creation functions therefore, high levels of academic staff's turnover intention represents a risk to maintain institutional stability and their future sustainability. Although studies have investigated numerous antecedents of turnover intention, there is insufficient empirical evidence on how reward system affects academicians' retention decision via continuance commitment particularly in the context of Malaysian Private Universities listed in the QS World University Rankings. Based on social exchange theory and the Meyer and Allen three-components model of organizational commitment, this paper investigates the relationship between reward systems & turnover intention for academicians where continuance commitment is tested as a mediating variable. Reward systems were operationalised within a total rewards framework, including the dimensions of pay, work-life balance, supervisor support and employee recognition. A quantitative method was used and data were collected using a structured questionnaire with members of staff in the selected private universities in Malaysia. Among 2,306 academicians the data was processed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. The results suggest that the analysed dimensions of the reward system did not show a direct statistically significant effect on turnover intention. However, continuance commitment yielded valuable informative significance in predicting academicians' turnover intention as well, indicating that perceived cost to leave may also be an impact for turnover decision beyond the dimension of immediate reward. While not all proposed relationships were supported, the findings add to the higher education literature by drawing attention to the context-dependent nature of reward effectiveness and the importance of continuance commitment in academic retention. Implications for university administrators are considered, as well as areas for future research.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
 CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	 1
1.1 Preamble	1
1.2 Background of Study	1
1.3 Problem Statement	6
1.4 Research Objectives	18
1.5 Research Questions	18
1.6 Research Significance	18
1.7 Scope of Study	22
1.8 Definition of Terms	25
1.9 Thesis Organization	27
1.10 Conclusion	29
 CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	 30
2.1 Introduction	30
2.2 Turnover Intention	30
2.2.1 Relationship Between Independent Variables and Turnover Intention	32
2.3 Reward System	35
2.3.1 Overview of the Reward System	35
2.3.2 Extrinsic Rewards and Turnover Intention	36
2.3.3 Intrinsic Rewards and Turnover Intention	37
2.4 Continuance Commitment as a Mediating Variable	37
2.5 Remuneration	40

2.6	Work-Life Balance	42
2.7	Supervisor Support	45
2.8	Employee Recognition	47
2.9	Social Exchange Theory	50
2.10	Conceptual Framework Overview	51
	2.10.1 Independent Variables	52
	2.10.2 Mediating Variable	52
	2.10.3 Dependent Variable	53
	2.10.4 Integrative Perspective	53
2.11	Operational Definition of Conceptual Framework	54
	2.11.1 Remuneration	54
	2.11.2 Work–Life Balance	55
	2.11.3 Supervisor Support	55
	2.11.4 Employee Recognition	55
	2.11.5 Continuance Commitment (Mediating Variable)	56
	2.11.6 Turnover Intention (Dependent Variable)	56
2.12	Conceptual Framework	57
2.13	Hypothesis Development	57
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		63
3.1	Introduction	63
3.2	Research Philosophy	63
3.3	Research Design	64
	3.3.1 Overview of Research Design	64
	3.3.2 Purpose of the Study	64
	3.3.3 Type of Investigation	65
	3.3.4 Research Setting	65
	3.3.5 Time Horizon	65
	3.3.6 Unit of Analysis	66
	3.3.7 Interference	66
3.4	Sampling Strategy	66
3.5	Questionnaire Design and Instrumentation	70
3.6	Data Collection Procedure	74
	3.6.1 Descriptive Statistics	76

3.6.2	Inferential Statistics	77
3.6.3	Rationale for Using PLS-SEM	77
3.7	Conclusion	78
CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS		80
4.1.1	Introduction	80
4.2	Questionnaire Response Rate	80
4.3	Missing Data	81
4.4	Data Outliers	82
4.5	Data Normality	84
4.6	Demographic Profile of Respondents	86
4.7	Descriptive statistics	88
4.8	Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)	89
4.9	Construct Reliability of the Model	89
4.10	Discriminant Validity	91
4.11	Fornell-Lacker	92
4.12	Heteroit Monotrait (HTMT)	92
4.13	Cross Loading	93
4.14	Assessment of Structural Equation Model	95
4.15	Variance Inflation Factor	95
4.16	Coefficient of Determination (r^2)	96
4.17	Effect Size (f^2)	96
4.18	Stone Geisser (q^2) Predictive Relevance	97
4.19	Direct Path coefficient	97
4.20	Mediating Effect	98
4.21	Final Model SEM	99
4.22	Key Interpretation Point	100
4.23	Summary	102
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION		103
5.1	An overview of the research	103
5.2	Summary of Findings	104
5.2.1	Summary of Hypotheses Testing	105
5.2.2	Discussion of Key Findings in Relation to RO & RQ	105

5.3	Theoretical Contribution	109
5.4	Methodological Contribution	110
5.5	Managerial Implication	111
5.6	Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research	113
5.7	Conclusion	115
REFERENCES		117
APPENDIX		121
AUTHOR'S PROFILE		123

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Title	Page
Table 3.1	Total Population of Academician in Four Selected Malaysian Private Universities	69
Table 3.2	Measurement for Remuneration	71
Table 3.3	Measurement for Work–Life Balance	71
Table 3.4	Measurement for Supervisor Support	72
Table 3.5	Measurement for Employee Recognition	72
Table 3.6	Measurement for Continuance Commitment	73
Table 3.7	Measurement for Turnover Intention	73
Table 3.8	Summary of Measurement Sources	74
Table 4.1	Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate	81
Table 4.2	Percentage of Missing Value for Each Variable	82
Table 4.3	Univariate Outlier	83
Table 4.4	Skewness and Kurtosis Result	85
Table 4.5	Demographic Profile	86
Table 4.6	Mean and Standard Deviation Result	88
Table 4.7	Construct Reliability of the Model	90
Table 4.8	Fornell-Larcker	92
Table 4.9	HTMT Result for Each Construct	93
Table 4.10	Cross-Loading Result	93
Table 4.11	Assessment of Inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)	96
Table 4.12	Assessment of Coefficient of Determination (r^2)	96
Table 4.13	Effect Size (f^2) Result	97
Table 4.14	Stone Geisser (q^2) Predictive Relevance Result	97
Table 4.15	Summary of Results for the Direct Effect	98
Table 4.16	Summary of Results for the Mediating Effect	99
Table 5.1	Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results	105

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Title	Page
Figure 2.1	The Components of Total Reward System	36
Figure 2.2	Conceptual Framework	57
Figure 4.1	Measurement Model	99
Figure 4.2	Structural Model	100

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

This chapter forms the foundation for this thesis by describing the research background. Secondly, it identifies the problem and the research emphasis that will be pursued. The major goal as well as the research topics are then specified. The significance of the research and the scope of the research are also discussed in this chapter.

1.2 Background of Study

People will participate in a variety of endeavours, groups, and activities to support their way of life. However, the amount of time that people spend on these activities is mostly depending on their personal predilection. Turnover intention, which is the mental decision to leave a job, and turnover behaviour are linked because turnover intention comes before actual turnover behaviour. As a result, it is a useful predictor for organizations that want to tackle potential attrition before it actually occurs. There are many factors that influence it including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work environment, managerial support, and external opportunities. The notion is based on the psychological and organizational theories that explain that an employee's decision to leave is usually due to a complex combination of personal attitudes, perceptions, and external factors (Pieters et al., 2022).

People will alter or abandon their jobs and organisations to the extent that it is comfortable for them to do so. The desire to quit, also known as turnover intention simply indicates the requirement for leaving one's work or organisation (Ramasamy & Abudullah, 2020). Turnover intention refers to whether employees plan to leave their organization or if the organization plans to terminate them. Like actual turnover, it can occur either voluntarily or involuntarily. (Saufi et al., 2023)

Singh (2020) believed that in today's changing environment and organizations, buffered by globalization, social variation and intense competitive environment, the

sources of sustained competitive advantage have lifted from finance concept to technology side and now to human assets. In the efforts to achieve the organizations goals, management need to understand how to motivate their employees by attempting to comprehend employees' attitudes toward their jobs and personal lives along with the various personality types. The increasing rates of academic staff members leaving educational institutions could hinder the productivity of this profession in a long run (Gerhardt & Karsan, 2022).

Academics will continue to be in great demand in tertiary education level for years to come however, universities still struggle to hold on to these valuable, challenging, and expensive to develop and replace human resources that are few and far between among fresh academics entering the ranks of tertiary education (Pieters et al., 2022). Academicians' turnover is not a foreign issue for private institutions in Malaysia. High turnover rates can occur across all levels of academic staff, including professors, associate professors, assistant professors, senior lecturers, and even newly appointed academics. (Maliga K, 2023). Yukongdi and Shrestha (2020) believed that turnover can affect an organization ability to sustain employees with high level of skills and competency. Turnover intention, or the migration of employees from one company to another within a certain time frame, frequently results in a deterioration of the organization's standards.

Reward system is a combination of methods and practices that organizations use to appraise and compensate their employees for their performance and contributions. These rewards can be either extrinsic, such as salary increases, bonuses, and benefits, or intrinsic, like recognition, opportunities for professional growth, and a supportive work environment (Yusof et al., 2023). Recent research suggests that a well-designed reward system that is essentially fairness, equity, and motivational principles based can be used to make employees feel of value and better positioned to contribute meaningfully to organizational goals (Chin & Rasdi, 2022). Moreover, it has been found that when both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are combined, job satisfaction, employee retention, and performance outcomes are all elevated (Nawawi et al., 2023).

Reward systems in the current professional era, have shown to play a significant role in enhancing job satisfaction and commitment of employees from any field of professions (Syed, 2020). A reward system is a methodical approach to a plan or a programmed that provides incentives for those people or groups who perform effectively in the company. There are two categories for reward systems (Armstrong,

2007). Both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits fall under this category. Based on Armstrong (2007) extrinsic rewards mean those that give employees monetary compensation for their efforts. Extrinsic rewards which are not part of the work itself are commonly offered to employers to stimulate certain desired behaviors including the achievement of organizational goals and performance targets. Acknowledging that extrinsic rewards have the potential for high motivation, it should be noted that they should be carefully applied so as not to diminish the effect of intrinsic motivation or not to create unhealthy competition among employees.

Intrinsic rewards are non-cash incentives that meet the inner needs of employees, such as self-development, job satisfaction, recognition, and a sense of achievement. These rewards mostly come from the job itself giving the worker the opportunity to learn, be creative, and grow individually.

Evidence from various studies indicates that intrinsic rewards have a significant positive influence on employee motivation and performance. For example, Manzoor et al., (2021) affirmed that when employees are offered intrinsic rewards, they are motivated, therefore, performing better at the workplace. Equally, Wang et al., (2024) findings unveiled that intrinsic rewards in which recognition and opportunities for professional development are crucial, lead to the high satisfaction of employees.

Other research has demonstrated that the concept of intrinsic rewards is in line with the Self-Determination Theory which puts great emphasis on autonomy, competence, and relatedness as the key factors in the creation of intrinsic motivation. Bradshaw's experiment published in Time magazine backs up this perspective by suggesting that if a person is driven by personal development but not by financial success or social status, they are happier and more fulfilled than those who are driven by extrinsic goals.

The informative structure by Zamri (2023) clearly illustrates the problem of academics turnover in Malaysia caused by the considerable impact of low salaries, negligible intrinsic rewards, and the lack of career advancement chances. These shortcomings lead to job dissatisfaction and a sense of career stagnation, hence effecting their commitment prompting many lecturers to consider leaving their current institutions.

Malliga (2023) also discovered that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards appeared as the main factors significantly affecting the academic staff's turnover intentions. Furthermore, Orpina et al., (2022) confirmed that turnover intention in the academic

community is strongly predicted by job satisfaction as a vital factor among the faculties of Malaysian private universities.

Therefore, these findings directly signal the need for restructuring in the reward systems of various private universities. These changes could not only address the problem of job dissatisfaction but also help in the reduction of the high turnover rates among academic staff by correcting the root causes intrinsic and extrinsic rewards' issues.

Reward systems are also necessary in employee retention. Organizations that provide motivation and fair rewards are more likely to keep their key employees because they feel appreciated and fairly paid for their work efforts (Mabaso et al., 2022). The Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) suggests that employees are more likely to stay with an organization if they perceive a positive exchange relationship, where their contributions are adequately rewarded and compensated with the benefits.

Along with that, reward systems can also affect turnover intentions, which is a point of major concern for organizations that want to have a stable workforce. Therefore, when employees perceive that their contributions are not rewarded adequately or they are unhappy with the reward system, they are more likely to form intentions to leave. This is especially true in competitive industries where skilled employees can easily look for better rewards in other companies. In contrast, companies with good reward systems often have more loyal employees and lower turnover rates, which helps to strengthen the organization and make it more successful in the long run.

In the Malaysian higher education context, where private universities have become an integral part of the national educational landscape and have seen remarkable growth over the last few decades, the issue of talent retention among qualified and committed human capital has surfaced as a critical factor amidst the current climate of fierce competition and institutional performance and excellence (Hassan et al., 2021). In particular, a key human resource component affecting turnover intention of academicians in universities is their employment rewards, whose multifaceted characteristics can influence organizational commitment and turnover (Ng & Choi, 2020; Al-Abrrow et al., 2022).

Academic staff in universities, as knowledge workers, are typically driven not only by extrinsic rewards but also by their intrinsic motivators and internal work-related values. The combination of intangible and institutionalized rewards are designed to attract, engage, and retain talented human resources by rewarding the employees with

factors that encourage affective commitment (Lee & Teo, 2021). Among the two types of rewards, intrinsic rewards, namely opportunities for growth, recognition, autonomy, and meaningful work, have consistently shown positive associations with affective commitment and continuance commitment, and are found to significantly impact such commitment in knowledge-based industries and workforces (Tang et al., 2022). In addition, the extrinsic factors including salary, promotion, bonus, and job security, which can be treated as more tangible employment compensations, are another form of rewards that are designed to elicit positive outcomes from and for employees.

As both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are found to be independently associated with turnover intention (Asim et al., 2021), and affective and continuance commitments are argued to directly result from the strength of commitment as well as the types and quality of employment rewards (Meyer & Allen, 1991), this research expects that continuance commitment will mediate the relationship between reward system and turnover intention among academicians in Malaysian private universities. Nevertheless, there is a gap in the existing research in this regard, especially among Malaysian private universities that might have distinct institutional reward practices in comparison to public universities under the influences of different governance mechanisms, financial resource availability, and institutional strategies and missions (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2020).

The increasing rates of academic staff members leaving educational institutions could hinder the productivity of this profession in a long run (Gerhardt & Karsan, 2022). In the event that the competing universities offer better conditions for their academic employees, they may choose to leave the institution. The situation might get worse and worse if the turnover rate is high because the continuity of academic programs is disrupted and the university's performance is not at its best due to the loss of institutional knowledge. The problem with poorly designed reward systems is that they usually do not include really important things, like funding for research, attendance at conferences, or academic advancement. Such a limitation can hamper the intellectual and professional growth of teachers and make it hard for them to keep up with the latest developments in their fields and contribute to the academic prestige of the institution.

Academics will continue to be in great demand in tertiary education level for years to come however, universities still struggle to hold on to these valuable, challenging, and expensive to develop and replace human resources that are few and far between among fresh academics entering the ranks of tertiary education (Pieters et al.,

2022). Both the institution and the staff stand to gain by finding strategies to keep them around and use them for the growth of the organization. This emphasizes the need for regular monitoring, being alert of the changes in job attitudes and preventing these negative consequences related to turnover (Singh, 2020).

Retention of qualified and competent academicians for maintaining quality in academics and high performance in an academic institution is extremely crucial. In view of that, the study will look into turnover intention among academicians. The study will further focus on different rewards, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, on turnover intention of academicians in private universities in Malaysia. The study will also focus on look at the mediating role of continuance commitment on turnover intention of academicians. Retention of qualified and competent academicians in the academic institution is essential for the quality in academics and high performance. This study will focus on turnover intention among the academicians in the selected private universities in Malaysia. The study will focus on the effect of both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards on turnover intention among academicians. The study will also further focus on continuance commitment of academicians. The study on turnover intention among academicians will be beneficial in implementing better human resource policies and thus building more sustainable environment in academic institutions.

1.3 Problem Statement

This phenomenon can be more pronounced in private universities due to the lack of standardized employment and promotion benefits (Hashim et al., 2023). Most private universities tend to establish their own job descriptions and conditions of service for employees, which are not regulated and may vary depending on the universities themselves. For example, the salary scheme in most private universities differs from public universities as it is less standardized and more variable (Hashim et al., 2023). The lack of uniform policy on job conditions has created a negative attitude among the faculty and staff of these universities (Latif et al., 2022). This gap has become a serious obstacle in the recruitment and retention of academic staff and top-quality faculty to the institution. The present study is an effort to gain further insights and broaden our understanding of these and other issues that concern our higher learning institutions.

Turnover intention has become one of the most topical issues that are facing most of the organizations nowadays. Even though many studies have been conducted

to cover the subject of turnover intention, there has been no successful outcome (Pieters et al., 2022). For example, many of the previous studies of turnover intentions were mostly related to various organizations and rarely focused on the Private Higher Education Institutions (Ramasamy & Abdullah, 2020). So, this issue needs to be focused on because it can cause negative impacts on the organizations' performance and credibility (cite).

A reward system is any mechanism that provides extrinsic or intrinsic rewards to employees for their work contributions (Foo et al., 2023). Reward systems in higher education institutions can be intrinsic (psychological), such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, recognition, feelings of accomplishment and achievement, or extrinsic (physical) such as promotions, salaries, and bonuses. One's perception of the appropriateness of the reward system offered by the organization could determine the level of turnover intention in the organization (Zamri, 2024). As turnover intention is the likelihood that a person will voluntarily leave their present job (Foo et al., 2023), it is influenced by a variety of factors including job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and perceived fairness of the rewards system (Foo et al., 2023; Zamri, 2024). However, a well-structured and fair reward system could increase the motivation and satisfaction of employees, thereby reducing turnover intentions and promoting organizational commitment (Foo et al., 2023).

A number of previous studies have focused on the possible impacts of reward systems on organizations, but most of them have only focused on extrinsic rewards, and ignored the importance of intrinsic rewards. For instance, Ng and Choi (2020) discussed the impact of reward systems on commitment to the organization, focusing only on extrinsic rewards like salary and promotions. However, in knowledge intensive environments, intrinsic rewards might have an equally important role in determining employees' commitment to their organizations (Tang et al., 2022). Besides that, most studies that investigated the impact of reward systems on organizations failed to consider both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards in a single model. Thus, the present study will focus on both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards in a single model to examine their impact on turnover intention in the Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institution.

The role of academician in higher education is continues to gain attraction even though the reward systems in higher education organizations especially in the private higher learning institutions seem to be unsatisfactory (Latif et al., 2022). This could have resulted in a high level of turnover intention in academicians which can lead to

various other issues, for example, interruption of academic program, loss of experienced academic force in the faculty and ultimately the decline of the quality of education in higher learning institution (Khan et al., 2024).

In Malaysia, there is a clear and distinct difference in salary schemes between the public and private higher learning institutions. Public universities often operate under the standard remuneration system that is guided by the Public Service Department which includes standardized salary scale, annual increment, pension and housing allowance, among others. These benefits, compared to those in the private universities, offer job security and long-term financial stability for the academicians (Rahman, 2020). In the private institutions on the other hand, there is very minimal if any, highly variable compensation scheme, compared to the public universities, which ultimately means that academicians may be provided with a lower base salary and lack of long-term financial security and benefits (Yusoff et al., 2022).

Salary and compensation play a critical role in talent retention in higher learning institutions, especially in the private higher learning institutions in Malaysia. The difference in salary schemes has significant implications for job satisfaction, commitment, and perceived equity, which in turn impacts talent retention. According to Lee and Hashim (2021), in Malaysia, the turnover rate among the academic staff in private universities has been reported to be more than 26%, while that in public universities is approximately 11%. Low job security, insufficient rewards, and the lack of or inconsistent career advancement opportunities in private universities have been identified as some of the major contributors to high turnover rates in these institutions (Ismail & Khalid, 2023). These rates are not only disruptive to the academic operations but also have a long term adverse effects on institutional development and the overall quality of education.

The most appropriate way to redress the situation is to urge private institutions in Malaysia to consider revising their compensation packages to be more competitive and transparent. Financial and non-financial reward systems both are essential to enhance the satisfaction of the faculty and staff, promote their commitment and ultimately to retain the best talent in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions (Abdullah et al., 2024).

The private higher education sector in Malaysia has witnessed an increased trend in turnover intention among its academic staff in the recent years. This trend is posing a threat to institutional stability, educational quality, and achievement of long term

strategic goals. For example, according to the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), the overall turnover rate for the Malaysian education sector was 29.2% in 2020, with both new and senior lecturers experiencing one of the highest turnover rates. This statistic exceeds the voluntary employee turnover rate of 6.5% which has been reported across the various industries (MEF, 2020).

A similar trend was also found in the research that was conducted by Khan et al. (2024). In the study, they noted that the academic staff in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) have a lot of tasks and expectations such as internationalization activities, revenue generation, maintaining reputation and relationship with businesses, among others. This added responsibility is leading to a high dissatisfaction rate which has been found to result in a high turnover intention (Khan et al., 2024). There are many other factors that have contributed to this increase, and a recent research done by Zamri (2024) found that inadequate extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, lack of promotion or career advancement opportunities and the increase in workload had a negative impact on job satisfaction and led to an increase in turnover intention among lecturers in Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions. The noted factors are also affected by the financial model of the private higher learning institutions which is based on student's tuition fee and as such most of these universities are always working with lean budgets. As a result, most of these universities are not in a position to give attractive reward to the lecturers, which has caused a leakage of talent from the sector.

The research also noted that the mediating mechanisms of how rewards influence turnover intention are not well understood, and commitment, particularly continuance commitment has been found to be lacking in much of the recent research (Hashim et al., 2023). Continuance commitment is defined as an employees perceived cost of leaving the organization (Lee & Teo, 2021). The rising turnover intention has been found to warrant for the need for research on how both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards influence retention in the context of Malaysian private universities and the role that continuance commitment and other mediating factors could play in the retention and turnover intention.

Previous literature have established that organizational commitment is one of the best predictors of turnover intention but the role of continuance commitment has not been well established in the recent literature (Lee & Teo, 2021). For example, in Malaysia, since private universities offer less employment benefits, promotion structure, and institutional resources when compared to the public universities, there is

a need to find out whether continuance commitment plays any role in the turnover intention. Previous studies have found that the academics in Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions feel a lesser job security and lack of institutional rewards which could be increasing the role of continuance commitment (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2020).

A possible mechanism in which continuance commitment would mediate the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention is a plausible concept, however, empirically the association is still ambiguous and requires further clarification. Some of the earlier studies have reported that an attractive reward system would increase continuance commitment by increasing the costs associated with leaving the current job (Asim et al., 2021) while the others have noted that excessive use of extrinsic rewards would not have any impact on continuance commitment, if the intrinsic motivators are not present in the system (Al-Abrow et al., 2022). In Malaysia, the connection between continuance commitment and turnover intention in private universities has not yet been researched. We believe that this variable should be investigated in this setting.

The work motivation among Malaysian academics was examined in a previous study to provide a baseline for cultural differences in response to the reward systems (Bahar et al., 2024). The findings revealed that academics in the industry are more motivated by self-development. This might be the reason for a possible weaker link in between reward systems and turnover intentions in Malaysian private higher learning institutions as they were no longer limited by the lack of promotions or rewards because the higher the self-motivation, the lower the levels of job dissatisfaction and turnover intention (Bahar et al., 2024). Thus, it might be possible that cultural variations, as exemplified in the disparity in self-improvement emphasis, make them less vulnerable to the lack of promotions/rewards. This phenomenon must be investigated further in an effort to better recognize the role of continuance commitment.

A similar study which was based on identifying the preferences of millennials in higher education institutions was also conducted in the Malaysian context (Ghani et al., 2022). The results found that intrinsic rewards like autonomy, recognition, and challenge were given a higher preference by the millennials and this might be the reason for no or weak relationship between reward system and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions as they were not leaving the organizations because of the lack of rewards as the millennials were given autonomy to do the work in their way (Ghani et al., 2022). The same conclusion can be drawn with this study because a

similar trend was also noticed for the Malaysian millennials in private higher learning institutions.

With the respect to organizational commitment, a recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context noted that commitment level was highly related to the cultural beliefs and values, organizational support, employment security and institutional trust (Bahar et al., 2024). Because cultural aspects, workplace autonomy, and intrinsic benefits are all now emphasized in recent studies, it is possible that these new reward systems have influenced continuance commitment and caused it to be higher, making the link between reward systems and turnover intentions in Malaysian private higher learning institutions weaker or null (Bahar et al., 2024).

Further supporting evidence for this claim can be derived from a recent study on job satisfaction in relation to organizational commitment of the academic staff in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions (Aman & Jaspal, 2022). The results showed that there was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment which indicated that academicians in the private higher learning institutions were more committed to their organization because they were satisfied with their job and this could be the reason for a null or weak relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions as they were not leaving the organizations because of lack of rewards as they were more committed to their work (Aman & Jaspal, 2022). We hypothesize that continuance commitment could play a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intentions, based on the evidence that was obtained from the previous research.

It is widely acknowledged that the usage of both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, for example, pay raise, public praises, etc. (Al-Riyami & Kakabadse, 2023), can result in commitment to the organization. However, according to a recent study, which conducted in the Malaysian context revealed that the usage of extrinsic rewards has no significant impact on organizational commitment (Ahmad et al., 2023). We believe that this was the reason for a weak or null relationship between reward systems and turnover intentions because the extrinsic rewards, which are mostly being used in most private universities had no effect on the commitment and thereby the turnover intentions of academicians (Ahmad et al., 2023). It is, therefore, rational to assume that continuance commitment will play an important role in mediating the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

The difference in the support and assistance between the public and private universities in Malaysia have been established in a recent study (Khan et al., 2023). The research found that there is very minimal or lack of institutional support in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions compared to the public universities and this could have resulted in a weak or null relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions as the employees were not able to get the basic required supports to do their job which was not a part of the rewards (Khan et al., 2023). Therefore, the continuance commitment was low and this had affected their decision of leaving the organization. We, therefore, hypothesize that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between the reward systems and turnover intentions in the Malaysian context.

In a recent study conducted in the Malaysian context, there has been an attempt to find out if the use of AI and technical support would have any effect on the relationship between job satisfaction and continuance commitment (Aman et al., 2022). The study found that the introduction of AI and technical support did not have any significant influence on the relationship, which means that job satisfaction and continuance commitment was not related and this could be a reason for a weak or null relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions (Aman et al., 2022). We can, therefore, hypothesize that continuance commitment will play an important mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

The impact of intrinsic rewards in terms of developmental opportunities on turnover intention has been found to be significant according to a recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context (Hashim et al., 2023). This means that, the higher the developmental opportunities, the lower the levels of turnover intention and this could be the reason for a weak or no relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions because they have the provision of developmental opportunities to the employees and thereby the levels of turnover intention would not be high (Hashim et al., 2023). We, therefore, hypothesize that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between the reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

A recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context and tried to find the cultural influence on turnover intention reported that in the Malaysian context, a significant portion of turnover intention was culture-related and this can be the reason

for a weak or null relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions as their turnover intention was culture-related and that would not be affected by the reward systems (Bahar et al., 2024). This is in-line with our hypothesis that continuance commitment will play an important mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

The cultural beliefs and values, organizational support, employment security and institutional trust were the factors which have been found to be related to the organizational commitment in a recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context (Bahar et al., 2024). This means that with the right cultural beliefs and values, organizational support, employment security and institutional trust the levels of organizational commitment would be higher and this could be the reason for a weak or no relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions as with the provision of these variables, the organization is committed to their jobs and thereby their turnover intention would not be high (Bahar et al., 2024). We, therefore, hypothesize that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between the reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

Job autonomy is an important aspect of any organization that can have a significant impact on employee motivation and productivity. A recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context found that job autonomy had a positive impact on employee motivation and productivity (Latif et al., 2022). This study might be the reason for a null or weak relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions as with the provision of job autonomy, the employees were more productive and thereby turnover intention would not be high (Latif et al., 2022). It is, therefore, rational to hypothesize that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

A recent study was conducted in the Malaysian context which had established that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention (Khan et al., 2024). This relationship was established by noting that employees who were less satisfied with their jobs had a higher likelihood of turnover and vice-versa. This means that with the better job satisfaction the level of turnover intention would be low and this could be the reason for a weak or no relationship between reward systems and turnover

intention in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions as the job satisfaction was high and this would not be affected by the rewards provided by the organization (Khan et al., 2024). Thus, we can hypothesize that continuance commitment will play an important mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

It is worth mentioning that a recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context had noted that the level of job satisfaction and the corresponding turnover intention in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions was significantly influenced by a variety of demographic factors, with age being the most noteworthy (Khan et al., 2024). This study might be the reason for a weak or no relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions as their turnover intentions were age-dependent and that would not be affected by the rewards system (Khan et al., 2024). We, therefore, hypothesize that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

A recent study conducted in the Malaysian context revealed a significant relationship between employee engagement and age, with older employees exhibiting higher engagement levels (Bahar et al., 2023). This could be the reason for a weak or null relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions because their turnover intention was depending upon their age and that would not be affected by the reward system (Bahar et al., 2023). We can, therefore, hypothesize that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

A recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context reported that there is a connection between self-efficacy and age (Majid et al., 2023). In other words, as employees in Malaysia become older, their levels of self-efficacy increase. This could be a possible explanation for a weak or no relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions as their turnover intention was depending on their age and that would not be affected by the reward system (Majid et al., 2023). Thus, it is hypothesized that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

There are many previous studies that have been able to establish a positive relationship between job satisfaction and age. This relationship had been noted because

as the employee is growing older, their job satisfaction is also increasing. A recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context had also found this trend (Khan et al., 2024). This could be the reason for a weak or no relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions because their turnover intention was depending on their age and that would not be affected by the reward system (Khan et al., 2024). We, therefore, hypothesize that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

The type of decision-making had been established to be a reason for the turnover intention in a recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context and noted that the centralized decision-making style was responsible for the higher level of turnover intention in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions and this could be the reason for a weak or no relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions as their turnover intention was depending on the type of decision-making which was centralized and that would not be affected by the reward system (Rahman et al., 2023). This is in line with our hypothesis that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

A recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context and was mainly focused on finding out the impact of different decision-making levels on turnover intention in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions found that as the level of involvement in the decision-making process increases among the employees, the level of turnover intention decreases and vice-versa (Rahman et al., 2023). This finding of the recent research could be a possible reason for a weak or null relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions because their turnover intention was depending on their involvement in the decision-making process and that would not be affected by the reward system (Rahman et al., 2023). We, therefore, hypothesize that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

In the recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context and was mainly focused on identifying the psychological contract and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions noted that there was a significant relationship between psychological contract breach and turnover intention and this

could be the reason for a weak or null relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions as their turnover intention was depending on the psychological contract and that would not be affected by the reward system (Hashim et al., 2023). This is in line with our hypothesis that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

A recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context had reported that the greater the involvement of employees in various organizational decisions, the lower the likelihood of a violation of the psychological contract (Hashim et al., 2023). This means that the lesser the violation of the psychological contract the lesser the level of turnover intention and this could be the reason for a weak or no relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions as their turnover intention was depending on the psychological contract and that would not be affected by the reward system (Hashim et al., 2023). We can, therefore, hypothesize that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

A recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context and mainly focused on exploring the role of the individual factors on turnover intention and found that the Malaysian private higher learning institutions their turnover intention was highly depending on the individual factors and not the organizational factors (Latif et al., 2022). This could be the reason for a weak or no relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions as their turnover intention was depending on the individual factors and that would not be affected by the reward system (Latif et al., 2022). We, therefore, hypothesize that continuance commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

A recent study which was conducted in the Malaysian context and mainly focused on exploring the factors that were impacting the turnover intention in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions noted that there was a significant relationship between psychological contract breach and turnover intention and this could be the reason for a weak or no relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private higher learning institutions as their turnover intention was depending on the psychological contract and that would not be affected by the reward system (Hashim et al., 2023). This is in line with our hypothesis that continuance

commitment will have a mediating role in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention in the Malaysian context.

The turnover intention among the academic staff in the Malaysian private higher learning institutions has been a burning issue in the recent past and various previous studies have tried to establish the possible reasons behind this increase but still it has remained an elusive task because there is a possibility of an unexplored variable which is mediating this relationship and that could be the continuance commitment. A thorough literature review on various recent research that has been conducted in the Malaysian context has helped us to come with the range of possible supporting evidence for the hypothesis. Thus, as a conclusion, it can be said that the evidence that was collected from various recent studies in the Malaysian context has been able to fully support the hypothesis.

The urgency of this research is substantial to the higher education sector as it is one of the most important sectors globally (Pieters et al., 2022). There are almost 70% increase in the rate of enrollment in Malaysian Universities within five years (Policy Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2022). The increasing rate of enrollment over the years reflects even a greater responsibility for universities to perform. According to Salwa (2022) academic reputation, employer reputation and academicians-student ratio hold an accumulation of 70% as part of the indicators to determine universities success rank in the QS world university ranking. Therefore, it is about time to consider the quintessential impact of turnover intention among academics in the success of universities. In addition, only four Malaysian private universities were listed in the ranking from 104 total of private universities recorded in the country. Hence, this study seeks to be a significant contribution to the body of literature for the Malaysian higher education sector in exploring the expense of reward systems in affecting turnover intention among Private Higher Learning Institution academics.

1.4 Research Objectives

The following section of this paper introduces the research objectives formed to navigate the research path. The research objectives are as follow.

- i. To analyse the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic reward systems and turnover intention among academicians in Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institution listed in the 2022 QS world university ranking.
- ii. To determine the mediating effect of employees' continuance commitment towards extrinsic and intrinsic reward systems and turnover intention among academicians in Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions listed in the 2022 QS world university ranking.

1.5 Research Questions

The key element of the research framework will be thoroughly and accordingly analyse based on the research questions arise.

- i. What are the relationships between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards used in Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions listed in the 2022 QS world university ranking and turnover intention among academicians?
- ii. Does employees' continuance commitment mediate the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic reward systems and turnover intention among academicians in Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions listed in the 2022 QS world university ranking?

1.6 Research Significance

This research gives significance for developing theory as well as for its practical use in human resource management in higher education especially in the Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institution context. The investigation of the reward systems and their consequence for the turnover intention, with the mediating variable of the continuance commitment, fills the crucial voids in the existing literature and provides the leaders of the organizations with the right directions for enhancing the organizational practices.

The theoretical standpoint of this research crystallizes the information about how reward systems impact turnover intention of academicians via the lens of continuance commitment theory. The scholarly literature to date has identified a multitude of turnover intention precursors; despite this, there is still a need for a connection between reward systems and continuance commitment in the higher education sector. A recent study by Farhan et al. (2024) examined the relationship between reward systems and turnover intentions among Malaysian private university academics, however, the findings of the study did not indicate a statistically significant indirect effect. In other words, the study did not confirm the mediating role of continuance commitment between reward systems and turnover intention, despite other factors, such as remuneration, reward system, or work-life balance and work influence turnover intention, the specific mechanism was not identified. This research aspires to positively altered this shortcoming and investigate the continuance commitment as a mediator between reward systems and turnover intention to provide a more intricate explanation of the mechanisms which results in retaining employees in an academic context.

The employment of various organizational commitment theories, such as Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model, coupled with a robust body of research on reward systems, significantly enriches this study's theoretical foundation, offering a more comprehensive framework to explore the nuanced dynamics of turnover intentions in academic institutions. The utilization of this theoretical foundation acquires special value in a higher education context, where alongside intrinsic rewards, the presence of coercive extrinsic rewards are also available, however, their interplay is often influenced by many other factors.

The total reward system framework proposed by Armstrong (2002) was adopted by the current study. This holistic approach goes beyond the financial aspects of remuneration to encompass a range of non-financial elements that collectively contribute to a more comprehensive and effective employee motivation and retention strategy. This model amalgamates financial incentives, including base and variable pay, share ownership, and benefits, with non-financial factors such as recognition, development opportunities, career prospects, and overall quality of life (Figure 2.1). The concept of the total reward system model can be described as an illustration of how the total rewards influence employee behaviour and their impact on outcomes. The applicability of using this model in the present research can be determined by the broad

scope of analysis, which means, the consideration of different aspects of remuneration and non-monetary employee benefits which are of value for the academic staff in Malaysian private universities. In this way, the present study contributes to the further exploration of Armstrong's total rewards framework and to determine the extent to which its diverse components affect commitment and intention to leave by an academic employee.

The relationship between organizational commitment and employee turnover intention will be shown through this research and it will prove important to the organization, practitioners, and body of literature. This could assist the company or organization to strengthen its dedication in retaining its knowledgeable and valuable employees. Employees who exhibit high levels of organizational commitment are less inclined to consider leaving their current positions. This reduced turnover intention can lead to significant cost savings for organizations, as it diminishes expenses associated with recruiting, selecting, and training new hires (Alzamel et al.2020).

The practical significance of these research findings is anticipated to be enormous for the administrators of universities, the policymakers, and the human resource specialists in the Malaysian private universities. The turnover of academics is a big problem which brings challenges such as the interruption of academic programs, the recruitment and training costs, and the educational quality. By understanding the function of reward systems and continuance commitment in determining turnover intentions, university administrators can create more efficient strategies to retain academicians.

Particularly, it is this research that will offer evidence-based strategies on how to design reward systems that not only increase job satisfaction but also reinforce the commitment of academicians to stay in the institution. For instance, it can be argued that rewarding systems that sufficiently address the financial and professional needs of the academicians could increase the perceived costs of leaving the institution, thus, the perceived turnover intentions of the employees would decrease. Also, the knowledge from this research can be used to create specific retention plans that are in line with the particular problems and possibilities of the Malaysian private higher education space.

On a larger scale, this research could in fact be used to develop a policy that would benefit the Malaysian higher education institutions. In the light of the fact that private universities are the main players of a higher education expansion, and so they need innovation, it is important to understand the issues that may lead to faculty

turnover in order to ensure that these institutions are performing well and growing. The findings of this study might allow the authorities to create rules and incentives that would encourage the use of reward systems in private schools, which would further improve the competitiveness and stability of this sector, as it is.

Career development strategies often focus on reducing turnover rates and enhancing employee retention. However, given that human resource professionals are more oriented to increase organizational commitment and lower the likelihood of turnover, more strategies should be implemented to increase organizational productivity, performance, and employee job satisfaction. For example, providing clear career development pathways can help enhance employee engagement and retention. Price (2025) emphasizes that organizations that support employee career growth outperform other companies by more than 12% on career development benchmarks, which results in better retention and productivity. Holding regular career conversations, making training available and accessible, and allowing internal mobility are practical strategies for making career development a cultural expectation.

Recognition and intrinsic rewards are also an essential part of a comprehensive HR strategy. The Achievers (2024) note that when employees work in a recognition-rich environment, their morale, job satisfaction, and loyalty to their employer increase, which reduces the likelihood of staff turnover. Employees who feel recognized for their efforts are more likely to go above and beyond to perform their duties and contribute to a positive organizational culture. In conclusion, by focusing on career advancement opportunities and recognition programs, HR professionals can foster a culture of high-performing employees who are motivated to help the organization meet its goals. In the consequence of the declination in the task productivity, the practitioner must identify feasible strategies for stabilizing the level of employee turnover intention thus, the findings of this study will assist to that goal.

Furthermore, this study can serve as relevant empirical evidence for experts that are interested in this subject. This is because employee turnover is a major problem in today's businesses (Singh, 2020). Due to the necessity to hire new employees to replace the departing ones, it will cause businesses to lose qualified workers and increase operating costs. Skilled workers leaving the organization will have an impact on its production, profitability, and effectiveness (Adnan et al., 2018). The company will have to overcome obstacles to meet its goals, objectives, and expectations.

This research is crucial for the functioning of Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institution as a whole. A carefully thought-out reward system that uses continuance commitment as a strategy can led to higher retention rates among academicians, thus ensuring continuity in teaching, research, and academic service. Turnover reduction allows universities to retain a stable and experienced faculty who can create an environment that is favorable for academic excellence and innovation. The continuity, thus, is necessary for improving the status of private universities which in turn, draws the best students and faculty and leads to the success of the universities over the long haul.

1.7 Scope of Study

This study is relevant to examining the relationship of reward systems and turnover intention in Malaysian private universities, particularly emphasizing the mediation role of continuance commitment. This research perspective is framed through a set of objectives which are the study population, geographical region, variables of interest, and research design.

Turnover of academic staff can have a profound impact on the stability and overall quality of the educational process within institutions. High turnover rates can result in a loss of institutional knowledge, negatively impact students' learning experiences, and increase recruitment and training costs. Therefore, comprehending the underlying factors that influence academic turnover is essential to develop strategies for effective retention. This study intends to synthesize the findings from a random sample of academicians of Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions listed in the 2022 QS world university ranking in Klang Valley, Malaysia.

A recent study by Bartaula (2023) reveals a notable correlation between the reward system and turnover intention, mediated by organizational commitment. The author shows that a well-designed reward system positively affects organizational commitment and subsequently decreases turnover intention. Moreover, Farhan et al. (2024) have conducted research on the impact of reward system on turnover intention among academics in private universities in Malaysia through the mediating effect of continuance commitment. The results demonstrate that continuance commitment partially mediates the relationship between the reward system and turnover intention.

Based on these findings, the current study attempts to identify the mediating effect of employees' continuance commitment on the relationship between reward system (encompassing various aspects, such as remuneration, work-life balance, supervisor support, and employee recognition), turnover intention among Malaysian private higher learning institutions academics. The core of this study is to investigate how different components of a reward system affect employee continuance commitment and turnover intention, with the aim to contribute to the improvement of human resource practices in the higher education sector.

The primary target of this research is Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions in Klang Valley that was listed in the 2022 QS world university ranking. It does include academics from different academic levels, all of whom are involved in teaching, research, and academic service. To effectively reach this specific group, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed. As the name suggests, it allows the deliberate selection of academicians of Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions in Klang Valley, particularly those listed in the 2022 QS World University Rankings, based on their relevance to the research criteria involving teaching, research, and academic service responsibilities.

The population for this study are among 3480 academicians from the Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institution that were listed in the 2022 QS world university ranking. To determine the sample size for academicians, the researcher uses the table which was developed by Krecie and Morgan (1970). This study utilized the individual unit of analysis which aimed at academician as the respondent in obtaining the data. Therefore, the sample population selected for this study based on the stipulated reference by Krecie and Morgan (1970) are among 346 academicians. The questionnaires were distributed via Google Mail to the representatives from each university. A structured questionnaire was developed and used for data collection. 400 questionnaires will be distributed via google form, inviting potential participants to complete the online survey. However only 346 surveys were returned back with credible responses.

This research is pinpointed in its geographical scope to Malaysia with a particular focus on the private universities that operate within the country. Malaysia's higher education landscape is characterized by a growing number of private universities that play a vital role in the expansion of access to higher education and the promotion of academic excellence. The selection of Malaysia as a geographical context for the study is crucial given the peculiarities of the country, which include the challenges faced

by private universities such as the financial constraints, competition for talent, and the need for effective faculty retention strategies. The findings of this study are primarily targeted to the Malaysian context, but they may also provide some insights to the settings in other countries that are similar.

The present study examines the relationships among three key constructs: reward systems (independent variables), turnover intention (dependent variable), and employee commitment specifically continuance commitment as a mediating variable. Drawing from Armstrong's (2002) reward systems framework, this study evaluates multiple components including remuneration, cash incentives, work-life balance, supervisor support, and employee recognition. These components represent both financial and non-financial rewards offered by institutions. Turnover intention refers to the likelihood that academicians will voluntarily leave their current positions, which is a critical concern for institutional stability and academic continuity. Employee commitment, particularly continuance commitment, is posited as the mediating variable, representing the perceived cost or risk of leaving the organization. This construct is essential in understanding how the influence of reward systems may indirectly affect an academician's intention to leave.

Intellectual resources is a crucial component in the education sector (Pieters et al., 2022). They believed that in order to achieve institutional goals any institution must have a motivated and devoted team of academics. Hence, keeping employees satisfied is critical for every institutions . Earlier study has demonstrated that the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention has a significant impact on organisations. However, the current study makes a substantial contrast in terms of employees' continuance commitment. As a result, the conceptual framework of this research is design to discover more possibilities about how employees' continuance commitment affects the relationship between reward systems and turnover intentions among academics in Malaysian tertiary institutions.

However, this research is limited to private universities in Malaysia specifically the four universities in Klang Valley, which means the results will not be generalized to public universities in Malaysia or higher education institutions in different countries. Furthermore, the study which is cross-sectional in nature, disallows the researcher to make causal inferences about the relationships between reward systems, continuance commitment, and turnover intention. On the other hand, the study's design and analytical

methods aim to provide a thorough understanding of these relationships in the specified context.

1.8 Definition of Terms

In this section, the operational definition was utilised to operationally describe the variables used for this study. Furthermore, this section will assist to provide some legitimacy and to ensure that the results could be further replicated.

The reward systems in the field of education are the organized framework of policies and practices of an organization to recognize and reward employees for their performance and contributions. In the context of higher education, reward systems typically encompass extrinsic rewards such as remuneration and cash incentives and intrinsic rewards such as work-life balance, supervisor support and recognition. In the context of higher learning institutions, a comprehensive reward system that integrates both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are essential for attracting, motivating, and retaining qualified academicians

Based on Armstrong's Handbook of Reward Management Practice (2010), rewards are defined as the strategies, policies, and processes developed to recognize and compensate the value and contributions that employees make toward achieving organizational objectives. Armstrong emphasizes that reward management encompasses more than just extrinsic rewards it also includes intrinsic rewards such as learning opportunities, recognition and supportive work environments. The aim is to create a system that is fair, equitable, and aligned with both organizational goals and employee needs, thereby enhancing motivation, engagement, and performance.

According to Mayer and Allen (1991) employees' organizational commitment are divided into three components which are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. As for this study, continuance commitment is established to be the mediating variable across the framework. Continuance Commitment is a form of organizational commitment where employees stay at an organization because they think that the costs of leaving would be high. This viewpoint may comprise of financial losses, career disruptions, or the reduction of accumulated benefits and investments.

Continuance commitment is expressed through a rational analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of staying or leaving and can influence the intentions to

turnover. Employees identified with high continuance commitment are most likely to remain in an organization because of the perceived negative effects of leaving even if their job satisfaction is not at a high level. According to Allen and Meyer (1991) the perceived social and financial consequences of quitting an organisation can be used to define continuous commitment. It also refers to the prerequisites for employees to stay with the company.

Turnover intention, adopted as the dependent variable in this study, is defined as an employee's conscious and deliberate intention to leave their current organization or position voluntarily. It reflects the degree to which individuals are considering resignation or have actively contemplated quitting, making it a strong antecedent of actual employee turnover. In the context of higher education, turnover intention among academicians poses a critical challenge, as it often signals underlying issues related to job dissatisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived inadequacies in reward systems. This study aims to explore the association between turnover intention and the various dimensions of reward systems provided to academicians, including both extrinsic and intrinsic elements. By analysing turnover intention as the outcome variable, the research seeks to contribute insights into the organizational factors that influence academic staff retention in Malaysian private universities.

Malaysian Private Universities in the context of this study are higher education institutions that are run by means other than government support and, therefore, are dependent on privately funded sources, such as students' tuition fees or donations. These NGOs are distinguished by their flexibility in governance and financial management, and their primary goal is to offer quality academic programs of various fields. Private universities in Malaysia are experiencing the challenges that are typical for banking in the areas of health, competition and the need to hire qualified staff, which in turn may determine the reward system and the faculty retention policy.

Furthermore, academicians are people working in higher education institutions who are mainly involved in teaching and research. They are faculty members, lecturers, professors, and researchers who are in charge of delivering educational content, conducting research, and contributing to the academic service. The academician is the linchpin in academia and institutional development of universities, and their work and capital are highly dependent on the reward system and organizational practices.

1.9 Thesis Organization

This thesis is structured into five chapters and each of them has a systematic method to study the relationship between reward systems, turnover intention and continuance commitment among the academicians in private universities in Malaysia. The structure of the thesis is as follows.

The first chapter provides the introduction to the research problem, giving in-depth information of the background, problem formulation, research goals, and research inquiries. It addresses the importance of the research, showing both theoretical and practical implications of studying the link between reward systems and turnover intention with regard to the mediating role of continuance commitment. Further to that, this chapter describes the scope of the study, gives definition of terms, and articulates the research framework that is used to analyse the issue.

Chapter 2 gives an outline of the important critical variables that were offered for the study and shows how the current investigation will further our understanding of the subject. To comprehend the current state of research in this area and to discuss the underlying theory, a literature review is also undertaken. Furthermore, this section of the thesis gives a critical analysis of existing literature concerning the main variables of the study namely, reward systems, turnover intention, and continuance commitment. This chapter starts with a presentation of the theoretical underpinnings of the study, such as organizational commitment theory and motivation theories. It then analyses empirical studies on reward systems in higher education, investigating how reward type influences job satisfaction and employee retention. The literature on turnover intention is reviewed as well, with a specific focus on the factors that affect the decision of academicians to either leave or remain in their positions. The idea of continuance commitment is scrutinized intensely, highlighting its significance as a mediating variable. This chapter ends by signalling the gaps in the existing literature that this study intends to fill.

Chapter 3 presents the research design and methodology of the study. It describes the planning stage of the research which included the quantitative techniques for the collection and analysis of data. The chapter refers to the target population and sample, naming the criteria for choosing the lecturers of private universities in Malaysia. It elaborates on the survey instruments adopted for the variable specifics reward systems, turnover intention, and continuance commitment and describes the

procedures for data validity and reliability. The chapter also presents the statistical techniques, such as mediation analysis, through which the research hypotheses are tested. Ethical considerations and the limitations of the research design are also addressed.

Chapter 4 gives a detailed analysis of the study as per the data collected through the survey. It starts with a descriptive analysis of the sample characteristics, then examines the relationships between reward systems, turnover intention, and continuance commitment. The mediation analysis results are reported, indicating the degree to which continuance commitment mediates the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention. This chapter further discusses the statistical significance of the findings, their implications for the research hypotheses, and also the statistical significance of the findings. Tables and figures are used to illustrate the key results and to facilitate the interpretation of the data.

Subsequently, SmartPLS 3.0 is employed in Chapter 4 to analyse the measurement and structural model. The outcomes of the structural model analysis lead to a variety of conclusions. PLS-SEM is ideally suited for this research due to its feature of modelling complex systems that consist of multiple constructs, indicators, and relationships among latent variables. As the aim is to study the relationship between reward systems, turnover intention, and continuance commitment, PLS offers a good technique for testing both direct and mediating effects in the proposed theoretical framework.

The closing chapter focused on the research implications of the findings in connection to the theoretical framework and the existing literature. It interprets the significance of the relationship between reward systems, turnover intention, and continuance commitment, thereby revealing how these findings boost the understanding of faculty retention in Malaysian private universities. This chapter also presents practical implications for the university administrators and the policymakers, providing instructions for the designing and implementation of reward systems that promote continuance commitment and reduce turnover intention. Consequently, the chapter briefly describes the limitations of the study and provides the recommendations for the future research.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter provides an introduction to the issue of turnover intention among Malaysian tertiary institution academics and introduces multiple types of reward systems namely, remuneration, work life balance, supervisor support and employee recognition. Furthermore this chapter introduces employees' continuance commitment as a detrimental subject in mediating the relationship between reward systems and turnover intentions. In this chapter, the researcher recognizes the perspective of previous literature on the relevant subjects as well as establishing the significance of the study. Research questions and research objectives that are appropriately formed to guide the development of the protocol and design of the study are also presented in this chapter. The chapter also includes a guide to the format of the chapters, the companion website, and key terminology.

Furthermore, next chapter will thoroughly explore the literature review associated with the study. A literature analysis is conducted to understand the state of research related. The underpinning theory are also discussed. Based on the literature analysis, the literature gaps are identified. Then, the research framework and hypothesis of this study are developed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The academic institutions' gains and stable development especially in the private university sector are related to the ability of universities to attract, keep and inspire the best academics. As the institutions are in a stiff battle for academic manpower, the necessity of knowing the factors that manipulate academic personnel loyalty and exit intentions has gained popularity. One of the most important determinants in this regard is the reward system, which refers to both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. It significantly influences employees' satisfaction, motivation, and commitment.

This chapter gives a review of the past works done on reward systems, turnover intention, and continuance commitment in the academic setting. The review starts by discussing the theoretical basis of reward systems, using important motivational theories to define the conceptual framework of this study. Furthermore, it then spends some time on empirical studies that study the effect of reward systems on turnover intention, mentioning the specific challenges and dynamics within the academic sector. Also, the chapter gives consideration to the concept of continuance commitment, presenting its role as a mediating factor in the connection between rewards and turnover intentions.

Through this review, the chapter aims to identify the sources of the existing doubts and to give a detailed explanation of how reward systems are responsible for the decisions of academicians to stay or leave their institutions. This piece of work will be the beginning of the next projects which will be the real-life investigation of these relationships with the Malaysian private universities.

2.2 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is an individual employee's explicit, conscious, and rational decision to leave a job voluntarily (Li, 2019). It is often a proximal antecedent to the actual turnover behaviour and is widely researched in human resource and

organisational behaviour fields due to its significant implications for organisational stability, cost, and performance (Chen et al., 2023). Turnover intention is especially impactful in academia where the departure of key faculty members can disrupt teaching, research, and administrative functions.

A major theoretical framework often employed in understanding turnover intention is the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This theory suggests that turnover intention is based on three factors namely attitudes towards leaving, subjective norms regarding the decision to leave and the perceived behavioural control over leaving a job. In academic environments, this theory has been further supported by Chen and Lee (2022), who found that academicians' turnover intention is a result of the interaction of these three factors.

Job Embeddedness Theory (Mitchell et al., 2001) also offers important insights into turnover intention by underscoring the significance of social ties and organisational fit. The study done by Lee, Hom, and Eberly (2023) on full-time faculty members indicated that the level of job embeddedness of a worker in the organisation reduced the turnover intention of these faculty members.

Job embeddedness theory (Mitchell et al., 2001) suggests that the employees tend to stay in their current job position if they are strongly connected to their job and the communities they live in, for example, relationships with colleagues, fit within the organisation and ties within the community. The theory points to the fact that, in addition to the factors work-related, the social and community ties an employee has also play an important role in an employee's decision to leave or stay. A study by Lee, Hom, and Eberly (2023) found that job embeddedness could buffer the effects of job dissatisfaction on turnover intention, especially in contexts where social and professional networks are strongly interwoven, such as in academia.

Turnover intention can be serious for any organisation. Academia is a field where the turnover of key faculty members can lead to a disruption in teaching, research, and administrative functions. The high turnover intention within a company may possibly set a chain reaction leading to high turnover rates, which in turn may be a reason for a company's poor performance. The knowledge of the middle-aged employees is lost, which causes gaps to occur, productivity to reduce and recruiting and training the new staff to be costly. The study by Abdullah, Ismail, and Ibrahim (2022) among academicians in Malaysian private universities showed that the higher turnover intentions were related to lower student satisfaction, lower research outputs and higher

operating costs. Employee turnover means the loss of the investment made in hiring and training the employees for the professional sectors. According to the study by Skelton et al. (2019), employee turnover costs companies 1.5 to 2.0 times of the average annual salary per lost employee and affects the productivity and revenue of an organization negatively.

High turnover intentions in an organisation can also cause its culture to change. The culture that has got used to employee turnover can turn into a culture where short-term commitments and lack of loyalty are the norm, causing the turnover rate to shoot high and making it very difficult to recruit a committed and cohesive workforce. According to the research by Meyer and Allen (2022), an organisation with high turnover intentions usually faces a hard time in maintaining a positive organisational culture, which is very vital for the success and stability of an organisation in the long term. According to Wang and Wang (2020), employees with more organisational commitment are less likely to leave.

One of the most important reasons for turnover intentions in the academia in Malaysia to rise is the non-availability of career development opportunities for the academics in the universities. The universities that provide better and well-defined career advancement options for their staff including promotion, professional development, and research support are the ones with lower faculty turnover. According to a study by Abdullah, Ismail, and Ibrahim (2023) the unavailability of career development opportunities is a main reason for high turnover intention among Malaysian academicians, especially those in private universities with limited resources for research and development.

Turnover intention is widely affected by a number of antecedents with some of the commonly acknowledged being job satisfaction, organisational commitment, perceived support, and reward systems (Judge & Kammeyer Mueller, 2021; Eisenberger et al., 2023). In particular, reward systems both extrinsic and intrinsic have been found to play a key role in affecting employee attitudes and behavioural intentions.

2.2.1 Relationship Between Independent Variables and Turnover Intention

Remuneration, categorized as an extrinsic reward, has been found to be a key driver of turnover intention. Research has consistently shown that perceived inequity in pay and inadequate compensation are significantly related to higher turnover intention

(Ismail et al., 2021). In the Malaysian private university context, the gap between public and private university salary schemes has contributed to dissatisfaction among academics in the latter sector and has led to increased turnover intention (Lee & Hashim, 2021; Rahman, 2020).

Remuneration is widely recognized as a foundational element of extrinsic rewards and a critical predictor of turnover intention. Employees who perceive pay inequity or feel inadequately compensated are significantly more likely to consider leaving their organization. This relationship is particularly pronounced in the academic sector, where the disparity between public and private university salary schemes exacerbates dissatisfaction among academicians. Recent studies by Ismail and Khalid (2023) have shown that inconsistencies in pay structures and a lack of transparency in salary increments contribute to elevated turnover intention among Malaysian private university academicians. In a similar study, Zamri (2024) found that dissatisfaction with salary levels is a key driver behind faculty exit intentions in underfunded private universities in the country.

Work-life balance, an intrinsic reward, has been found to be a critical factor in academicians' decision to stay or leave. Ahmad et al. (2023) have shown that Malaysian academicians who reported poor work-life balance were significantly more likely to have turnover intention. Flexible schedules, workload management, and autonomy were important mediators in this relationship. The connection between turnover intention and employees' level of satisfaction with the organization is rather significant because turnover intention is actively driven by factors that directly influence employees' job satisfaction. Turnover intention among Malaysian private university academics is shaped by their levels of job satisfaction and work-life balance.

Academics struggling to harmonize professional responsibilities with personal life or dissatisfied with their work environment are more inclined to consider leaving (Yusoff & Nasir, 2020; Ahmad et al., 2023)

Ahmad, Zainuddin, and Anuar (2023) found that work-life imbalance is one of the strongest predictors of turnover intention among Malaysian academicians. Flexible working arrangements and supportive policies were found to significantly mitigate such intentions. The same study also found that work-life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction and employee commitment, which in turn lowers turnover intention (Panisoara et al., 2020; Kakar et al., 2022).

Supervisor support, an intrinsic reward, reflects the quality of interpersonal relationships and leadership within institutions. Supervisor support influences turnover intention both directly and indirectly by contributing to employees' emotional well-being and job satisfaction. Supportive supervision through constructive feedback, empathy, and guidance can make academicians feel valued and supported (Fukui, 2019; García-Cabrera et al., 2023; Swanzy, 2020). Hashim and Hamid (2023) have shown that lack of supervisory support, especially for contract lecturers, was one of the most significant factors that contributed to higher turnover intention in Malaysian private institutions. Employees who feel unsupported by their supervisors or have an uncertain job tenure are more likely to report higher turnover intention (Ng & Feldman, 2022; Ahmad et al., 2023). A study conducted by Hashim and Hamid (2023) further proved that supervisor support is among the significant factors that determine the turnover intention of Malaysian academicians, especially those who are on contract or in non-tenured positions. Poor supervisor support have been associated with disengagement and high turnover intention among contract and non-tenured lecturers in Malaysian private universities (Bahar et al., 2024). Ng and Feldman (2022) further underscored the importance of institutional support structures, indicating that employees with perceived low supervisory support are at a higher risk of disengagement and attrition. Supportive leadership that recognizes contributions and provides professional development opportunities was also found to contribute to low turnover intention (Mabaso et al., 2022).

Employee recognition, another form of intrinsic reward, is being increasingly recognized as a non-monetary but psychologically significant factor. Recognition remains to be one of the most cost-effective and impactful intrinsic rewards to consider in efforts to influence employee retention. Employees who feel appreciated and valued for their work achievements are more committed to their roles and organizations (Jo et al., 2025; Saxena, 2025). According to Achievers (2024), organizations with formal recognition programs in place report up to 31% lower voluntary turnover. Manzoor et al. (2021) also affirmed that consistent acknowledgment of employees' contributions effectively cultivates employee loyalty and decreases the psychological intention to leave the organization.

The current study selects remuneration, work-life balance, supervisor support, and employee recognition as independent variables (IVs) based on their consistent empirical linkages to turnover intention across different contexts, particularly within

academia. The same variables holistically represent both extrinsic reward (remuneration) and intrinsic rewards (work-life balance, supervisor support, and recognition). This selection aligns with Armstrong's (2002) Total Reward Framework, which posits that a strategic blend of financial and non-financial rewards is crucial for talent retention and building institutional commitment.

Furthermore, as explained in the conceptual framework section above, several studies in Malaysian private universities have shown that dissatisfaction with both financial and non-financial rewards is a key driver of the high turnover rates in this sub-sector (Zamri, 2024; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2020). The selection of these IVs also fills a significant gap in the existing literature, where much of the previous research has been rather narrowly focused on financial rewards while ignoring the psychological and relational aspects of work life that also play a role in shaping turnover intention.

By looking at both reward categories and their relationship with turnover intention through the mediating effect of continuance commitment defined as the perceived cost of leaving the organization, this study will aim to offer a more holistic and contextualized understanding of employee retention among Malaysian academicians (Lee & Teo, 2021; Rahman et al., 2023).

2.3 Reward System

2.3.1 Overview of the Reward System

Reward systems refer to the policies and procedures adopted by organizations to appreciate and reinforce employees' contributions through financial and non-financial rewards (Armstrong, 2010). This includes extrinsic rewards (monetary, i.e., salary and bonus, and material benefits) and intrinsic ones, which represent the psychological rewards like recognition and praise, personal growth and development, work-life balance, and supportive supervision (Yusof et al., 2023). The components and features of reward systems are known as the determinants of employees' motivation, satisfaction, and retention (Mabaso et al., 2022). In higher education, especially in private colleges and universities in the context of intense competition, the reward system structure was a significant predictor of turnover intention and organizational commitment (Tang et al., 2022).

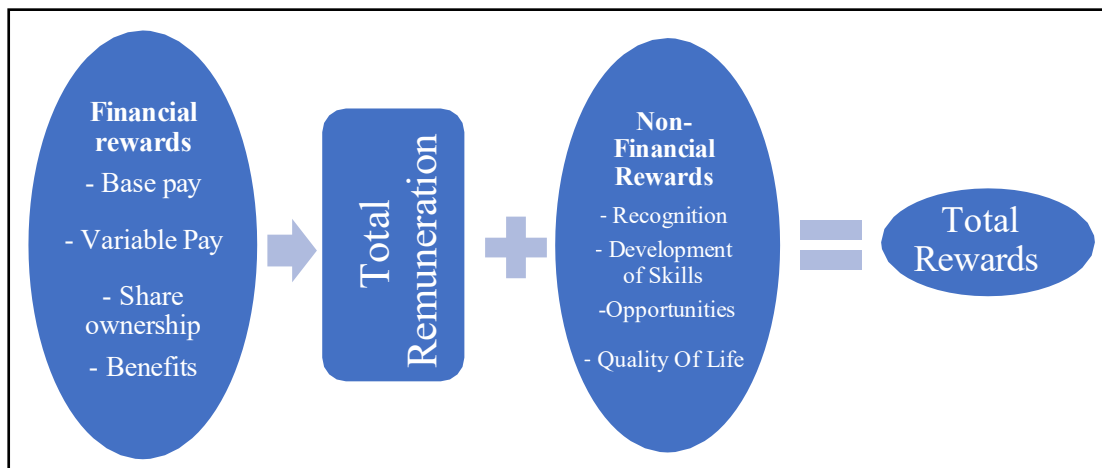


Figure 2.1 The Components of Total Reward System

In this study, the reward system is bifurcated into extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, both of which exert disparate, yet interrelated, effects on turnover intention.

2.3.2 Extrinsic Rewards and Turnover Intention

Extrinsic rewards are tangible benefits provided by the organization to employees, usually in the form of monetary or material compensation. Salary, bonuses, allowances, and job security are common examples (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). These rewards play a significant role in higher education institutions, especially in light of the increasing cost of living and lower compensation in public universities compared to private universities (Rahman, 2020).

Empirical research has validated the link between extrinsic rewards and turnover intention. Inadequate or perceived unfair financial compensation can trigger an employee's intention to leave the organization (Ng & Choi, 2020). A study by Ismail and Khalid (2023) showed that the lack of consistency in remuneration and clearly defined criteria for promotions in Malaysian private universities is one of the strongest drivers of turnover among academic staff.

In addition, since most private universities in Malaysia are financially unstable due to the over-reliance on income from tuition fees, they are unable to provide better financial packages. This results in higher turnover intention among staff (Zamri, 2024). Findings from Alzamel et al. (2020) and Nawawi et al. (2023) supported the argument that the lower salary leads to the higher turnover intention. Based on the foregoing

arguments, the construct of remuneration is treated as major extrinsic reward variable in this study.

2.3.3 Intrinsic Rewards and Turnover Intention

Intrinsic rewards are intangible and are a direct result of the work (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Herzberg, 1959). They include factors such as personal growth and development, autonomy, recognition, work-life balance, and supportive supervision. In the academic profession, where identity and intellectual fulfillment play a crucial role, such non-financial and self-oriented factors become even more important motivators (Tang et al., 2022).

In a recent study, Ahmad et al. (2023) concluded that the lack of work-life balance experienced by Malaysian academicians is one of the strongest contributors to their intention to leave the organization. In universities with heavy teaching loads and increasing administrative demands, this issue is particularly acute. Supervisor support is another factor that is essential in academic contexts for employees' well-being and commitment. Bahar et al. (2024) reported a significant negative relationship between the academic leaders' support and turnover intention among their subordinates.

Recognition is also a critical element of intrinsic rewards that is strongly related to motivation and retention. Achievers (2024) found that employees in recognition-rich environments had a higher level of morale and lower voluntary turnover rate. Manzoor et al. (2021) confirmed that the presence of intrinsic rewards, including such factors as personal appreciation and development opportunities, is vital for long-term commitment to the organization.

Based on the aforementioned literature, this study views work-life balance, supervisor support, and employee recognition as the core constructs of intrinsic rewards and will examine their effect on the turnover intention among academics in Malaysian private universities.

2.4 Continuance Commitment as a Mediating Variable

As described by Allen and Meyer (1991), continuance commitment is the attitude that an employee stays at work for the high sacrifice he or she has to bear to leave. In that regard, it is imperative to highlight that the three types of commitment

suggested by Meyer and Allen (1991) are different concepts that lead to retention for different reasons. While affective and normative commitments focus on emotional and obligatory attachment to the organization, continuance commitment is based on social, economic, and professional investments that an individual would lose in the event that they left their place of employment (Allen & Meyer, 1991). As such, conceptualizing continuance commitment in the context of the turnover intention phenomenon can provide valuable insights, thereby allowing for a more nuanced understanding of employee turnover intention.

The concept of continuance commitment is underscored in recent literature on turnover intention as a psychological mechanism that partially or fully mediates the influence of some factors. For example, Lee and Teo (2021) observed that the relationship between rewards and turnover intention is partially mediated by continuance commitment; that is, higher rewards translate into higher turnover intention because the former factor (rewards) leads to increased continuance commitment (Lee & Teo, 2021). This was also highlighted by Al-Abrrow et al. (2022) who stipulated that an organization can use a system of rewards to increase its continuance commitment which will in turn cause the employees to stay due to their high perception of the organization's investment. In addition, the continuity of the high turnover intentions of an organization can also result in a shift of organizational culture. As such, an organizational culture that has been accustomed to high turnover of its employees can easily shift to a culture where short-term commitments and non-loyalty is the norm. It is for these reasons that high turnover intention can also beget a culture of high turnover rates, which may render recruitment efforts arduous since finding a committed and stable group of employees will be more difficult. In their study on the turnover intentions of Australian public servants, Meyer and Allen (2022) cited similar results and concluded that organizations with higher turnover intention usually struggle with the development of positive organizational culture, which is often one of the building blocks of their long-term success and stability.

The relevance of the continuance commitment has also been established within cross-cultural perspectives. Pieters et al. (2022) pointed out that when fair treatment is present, rewards are strongly linked to higher continuance commitment, which ultimately results in lower voluntary turnover intention. In knowledge-based organizations, which higher education can be conceptualized as, Rahman et al. (2023) noted that the preeminence of structured remuneration, allowances, a safe working

environment, and many others indeed strengthen continuance commitment in organizations whose employees' job security is not guaranteed. This was the case in a study on private Malaysian universities where Mohd Yusoff et al. (2020) acknowledged continuance commitment as the most salient among the three types of commitment proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) due to the comparatively less secure work environment in private tertiary education institutions when juxtaposed to public universities.

In addition to that, scholars have also cautioned that continuance commitment cannot always be conceptualized as a good thing. In their work, Asim et al. (2021) recognized that while the relationship between continuance commitment and turnover intention is true, continuance commitment does not “always positively affect all outcomes such as performance, engagement, and job satisfaction” (p. 10). In other words, employees who are subject to the strong effects of continuance commitment will stay but are not prone to productivity improvement or progression (Asim et al., 2021). It is for this reason that this study should take a step further to position continuance commitment as the mediating psychological mechanism that clarifies how variables such as intrinsic rewards (supervisor support, employee recognition) and extrinsic rewards (pay and benefits) affect turnover intention in the study rather than a replacement for it.

The related literature is also replete with emerging information about how stress, among other work-related factors, can affect the relationship between commitment and turnover intention. In a survey-based research, Wang and Wang (2020) noted that when job stress levels are high, they can significantly decrease both organizational commitment and job satisfaction, which can be a source of increased turnover intention. In a similar case, Meyer and Allen (2022) concluded that organizations that have normal turnover as part of their organizational culture usually have long-term problems with sustainability because of the high challenges of having a cohesive and stable group of people. The significance of culture becomes more tangible in a Malaysian university setting where private and public tertiary institutions differ significantly in their human resource policies; particularly in their transparency and provision of structured remuneration, allowances, and working environments (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2020). Rahman et al. (2023) also noted that schools, universities, and other institutions that have organized pay schemes are more likely to see continuance commitment being high among their employees than schools with more ambiguous compensation practices.

In conclusion, this study should position continuance commitment as a mediating variable. The need to do this becomes important since the process by which reward systems affect academics' turnover intention is convoluted and not linear. In that regard, by increasing the levels of employees' perceived investment (financial, professional, social) in the organization, reward satisfaction indirectly causes higher continuance commitment, which in turn will indirectly increase an employee's wish to stay in the organization (Al-Abrrow et al., 2022; Pieters et al., 2022). Positioning continuance commitment as the mediating variable in the turnover intention phenomenon can also allow the study to be nested within a larger pool of studies that also position this concept as a mediating construct (Lee & Teo, 2021; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2020).

2.5 Remuneration

Remuneration can be defined as a form of payment made to an employee by an employer in exchange for services provided. It can take the form of direct cash (salary) or in-kind (bonuses, allowances) payments or benefits (Gupta & Shaw, 2020). Remuneration (base salary, allowances, and benefits) has been a longstanding form of extrinsic rewards for employees in employment relationships. The equity theory in organizational behavior posits that employees assess their input-output ratio against their referent peers' ratio, such that a perceived inequity in remuneration triggers dissatisfaction and, in turn, high turnover intention. Moreover, the expectancy theory holds that individuals are motivated when they believe that effort will be rewarded with adequate remuneration, which may reinforce continuance or normative commitment. Scholars like Armstrong and Taylor (2020) have noted the strategic role of remuneration in human resource management, highlighting its motivational, performance, and retention outcomes.

Remuneration's influence on turnover intention has been the subject of much empirical and theoretical inquiry. There is a substantial body of research highlighting the role of perceived salary and reward fairness as a major determinant of turnover intention. Colquitt et al. (2021) have shown that distributive justice and procedural justice in pay allocation are key antecedents of turnover intention. For example, when employees perceive their pay as inequitable, they are more likely to be dissatisfied, demotivated, and eventually have high turnover intention (Poon, 2020). This may have

significant relevance in the Malaysian private university sector, where the issue of salary uncompetitiveness with public institutions can be an especially sensitive one among academicians (Ismail et al., 2021). From a longitudinal perspective, organizations that provide inadequate and inequitable remuneration to their employees may find it increasingly difficult to attract and retain qualified academicians (Zamri, 2024).

Remuneration (pay satisfaction) has been shown in the latest literature to have a negative relationship with turnover intention. For example, Chen et al. (2023) found that pay satisfaction negatively affected turnover intention in a sample of service employees in China, and the relationship was explained by a higher perception of distributive justice. Another study by Stofberg (2022) has argued that clear and transparent remuneration policies (pay disclosure, clarity in merit and promotion pay raise, etc.) can decrease employees' turnover intentions by making them feel better supported by their organization. This relationship was shown to be particularly relevant in a private call center in South Africa. Yusoff et al. (2020) has also confirmed the negative impact of remuneration satisfaction on turnover intention in Malaysia's higher education sector, specifically among academicians in private universities. The study showed that turnover intention was among the most significant predictors of retention, as academicians in the private university sector are especially vulnerable to economic challenges and poor remuneration (unlike their counterparts in public institutions).

In terms of the theoretical foundation for the link between remuneration and turnover intention, a wide range of related work can be cited. At the most basic level, Adams' (1963) Equity Theory and Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory can serve as a foundation to build on the relationship between the independent variable (remuneration) and the dependent variable (turnover intention). Adams' Equity Theory states that employees engage in a subjective social comparison with a referent other in their organization about their input-output ratio and adjust their behavior based on the results of the comparison. Vroom's Expectancy Theory in turn posits that people are willing to exert effort if they believe it will be rewarded in the future with adequate incentives (remuneration). When employees find their expectations are not met, they may choose to disengage or seek alternative employment.

In addition, research has shown that the link between remuneration and turnover intention is often mediated by continuance commitment. Lee & Teo (2021) and Rahman et al. (2023) have found that employees are less likely to leave their organizations when

the financial and other benefits-related costs of job change are high, increasing continuance commitment (but not necessarily affective or normative commitment). In other words, remuneration levels and structures that are perceived as better and fairer can make employees perceive the costs of leaving as higher, which will reduce the likelihood of turnover (Alam et al., 2023). In summary, several empirical studies from Malaysia and the literature that provide support for the core argument of a negative relationship between remuneration and turnover intention have been provided. It is suggested that this relationship is a justified and evidence-backed one and will be supported by the proposed data analyses.

2.6 Work-Life Balance

Work–life balance (WLB) has attracted attention as a critical issue in employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational outcomes. This is especially so in knowledge-driven and high-pressure industries, including the higher education sector. WLB is the perceived equilibrium or trade-off between the responsibilities and activities associated with one’s work and those with family and personal life (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). A high degree of WLB indicates that an employee is satisfied with the time and energy allocation among the two areas, while a low degree means the opposite. Research has found that WLB is positively related to employee well-being, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization. In contrast, poor WLB is associated with stress, work–family conflict, and eventually turnover intention.

In the academic workplace, an extensive body of research indicates that poor work-life balance is a significant predictor of higher turnover intentions. In addition to workload and expectations from teaching, research, and administration, work-life imbalance is one of the strongest contributors to the intent to leave (Yusoff & Nasir, 2020). In particular, female academics in Malaysia private institutions face traditional social expectations in family and professional duties which leave them with an unreasonable burden that interferes with their work-life balance (Omar & Othman, 2021). In general, WLB, which can be supported by flexible working schedules, remote working options, or the employer’s benevolent policies, is crucial for employees’ retention (Putri & Amran, 2022; Griffiths et al., 2021). Turnover intention occurs due to conflicts and distress that might have been avoided or managed if the institution takes such factors as employee mental health into consideration.

The WLB construct in this study is informed by two relevant theories. The first is the Spillover Theory, which posits that workers' experiences and behaviors in one life domain have an impact on the other, for example, whether happiness at work spills over to home life or vice versa (Clark, 2000). The other is the Border Theory, which postulates that people draw (real or imagined) spatial or temporal borders around the work and life domains in ways that might or might not support balance (Demerouti et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the link between the two theoretical concepts under study in this paper is well-established. In the past, researchers have supported the argument with the help of role conflict theory (Kahn et al., 1964). In this framework, turnover intention is caused by a mismatch between an employee's role in work and other aspects of life (family, religion, etc.). The organization should try to prevent or at least manage such conflicts by providing flexible work options, employee assistance programs, support groups, and other means. Another theory linking WLB and turnover intention is the job demands–resources model (JD–R) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). According to it, turnover intention is driven by exhaustion or burnout which in turn is an outcome of the unmet JD–R model. WLB, in this approach, is an employee resource, namely a positive work condition that helps individuals resist or minimize the effect of job demands.

In recent years, WLB has been found to have a significant effect on employee turnover intention in the literature. In one of the latest and most comprehensive studies in this area, Xu et al. (2024) examined the work experiences of health care workers in China and found that WLB had an indirect effect on turnover intention. This effect was mediated by two other factors, namely job satisfaction and work engagement, which both directly affected intention to quit. A similar study by Yu, Lee, and Na (2022) confirmed that WLB was one of the key constructs linked to turnover intention due to work-family conflict (WFC). In both of the above-mentioned studies, a high degree of WLB could be achieved by taking advantage of flexibility in work arrangement and a family-friendly organizational culture. The findings above are also in line with JD–R model in that organizational practices enable WLB and make employees more engaged in their work thus dampening their turnover intention.

Specific to the Southeast Asian context, research also suggests that WLB plays a vital role in the desire of local workers to stay with their current organization. A recent paper by Fadilla (2024) confirmed that employees in Indonesia who had good WLB showed lower turnover intention and that it was mediated by less stress and greater commitment to the organization. In a national study of the Malaysian private higher

education sector, Rahman et al. (2023) showed that the sector was not immune to high turnover intention, but some institutions with more family-friendly and flexible work practices had lower attrition rates. In particular, a reduction in teaching loads, options for flexible working hours, and even availability of child-care facilities and family leave were effective (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2020). Such findings are crucial for the current study in that WLB is often among the first aspects of work to be sacrificed in the demanding environments of private universities (Zaitun et al., 2016). In this setting, teachers and academicians with little control over their time and schedule have the greatest risk of burnout and intention to leave.

However, some scholars find that the WLB effect is not as straightforward and that it may be moderated by other factors, such as employee generation or occupation type. Wang and Wang (2020) noted that although younger Gen Z employees had better work–life quality, this group also often had more tolerance for imbalance because of their prioritization of career and life advancement. Similarly, one study in Indonesia found that WLB had no effect on turnover intention among hospitality workers from Generation Z (Fadilla, 2024). These studies are an indication that the WLB–turnover relationship could be weaker in certain industries or among younger employees.

In the private higher education context of Malaysia, WLB can play an even more important role due to specific institutional characteristics. By and large, private universities in Malaysia have stricter and more competitive expectations than public counterparts in terms of teaching, research, and service (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2020). In addition, they often place a higher teaching load on their academic staff, resulting in more stress and less time for personal life and research, making WLB hard to maintain (Zaitun et al., 2016). In the light of the literature, a university that is unable to provide work flexibility, mental health counseling, or even a reasonable workload is likely to experience chronic turnover issues as their faculty leaves for better places. On the other hand, those that are able to implement family-friendly and flexible working arrangements will be rewarded with retention even in a competitive academic labor market.

In sum, there are enough grounds to suggest WLB as a negative predictor of turnover intention. While there are a few qualifications in terms of industries and demographic segments, the overall state of knowledge points to the strong role of WLB in affecting staff retention or attrition. For the present study, this means that WLB is a key intrinsic factor that is linked to academicians' turnover intention. Building on role

conflict theory and JD–R model, previous studies have confirmed that a more favorable perception of WLB leads to increased employee well-being, job satisfaction, and commitment, all of which are strongly negatively related to turnover intention.

2.7 Supervisor Support

Supervisor support is the extent to which employees believe that their immediate supervisors care about them, provide guidance, and are willing to help them succeed in their work (Eisenberger et al., 2002). It implies that supervisor behaviours are not only based on transactional leadership but are driven by care for subordinates and attending to their needs and well-being. In social exchange theory (SET) terms, supervisors who are supportive, caring and appreciative create a sense of obligation in employees that would lead to reciprocation through loyalty and lower turnover intention. In similar logic, leader–member exchange (LMX) theory argues that high-quality supervisor–subordinate relationships lead to feelings of trust and respect which reinforces employees’ organizational commitment and lowers withdrawal intentions.

Direct and indirect relationships between supervisor support and turnover intention have been well documented in recent empirical studies. In a cross-sectional study, García-Cabrera et al. (2023) found that supportive supervisor behaviours positively affected job satisfaction and psychological well-being which in turn mediated the negative relationship between supervisor support and turnover intention. In a similar study, Swanzy (2020) concluded that supervisor support lowered turnover intention through the same two mediators (psychological well-being and work–family conflict). These two recent studies echo the conclusions of Fukui’s (2019) longitudinal study in which supportive behaviours of supervisors in healthcare settings strongly predicted employees’ turnover intention, mediated by employees’ perceived safety and psychological trust in their leaders. Two very recent cross-sectional studies in two high-stress professions (child welfare and nursing) further confirmed that supervisor support buffered the impact of burnout on turnover risk (Li et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2022). In a more recent meta-analysis, Jiang and Probst (2022) concluded that supervisor support is one of the strongest turnover predictors, direct and indirect, and mostly mediated by job satisfaction and organizational commitment across industries.

In academia, supervisor support is of utmost importance due to the significant role that department heads or faculty leaders play in allocating workloads, providing

research guidance, and creating opportunities for professional development. Rahman et al. (2023) found that private university staff in Malaysia reported a lower turnover intention when they perceived their supervisors as supportive, considerate, and empathetic particularly when they reported high levels of job stress and job insecurity. Supervisor support can be seen as a critical intrinsic reward in an academic system where basic financial rewards might be limited and non-transparent or at times, non-existent or easily disrupted due to the private nature of these universities.

Study conducted by Hashim and Hamid (2023) stated that job security and supervisor support are the factors that influence the development of the turnover intentions in Malaysian private universities. The findings of this study concluded that lack of job security and supervisor support will cause the turnover intention to develop. As Hashim and Hamid (2023) have suggested that job security and supervisor support can improve the work and well-being experience of the academicians as they will have stable jobs which then can lead to loyalty and improvement in work and life well-being experience and develop better ways to face the workplace's stressors.

In the context of Malaysian private universities, the development of turnover intentions can be linked to social exchange theory and LMX theory. When academicians feel that they are not getting what they need or deserve from the institution in terms of support, job security, or other aspects of their work, it may create a sense of obligation, leading to the development of turnover intention as a way of reciprocating (Blau, 1964). Similarly, if the relationship between the academician and their immediate superior or supervisor is not based on high-quality exchanges, which results in reduced trust, obligation, and commitment to the organization, there is a higher chance of the turnover intention being developed (Harris et al., 2021).

Malaysian private universities are distinct from public universities in many aspects. Private university staff are often subject to higher teaching loads, more intense publication requirements, and less job security in terms of contracts, especially in early career stages (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2020). These factors add to stress and can contribute to higher turnover intention. A supervisor who offers constructive feedback, support in research and teaching, and emotional support can significantly reduce this stress and increase job satisfaction and loyalty. In contrast, an unsupportive or overly authoritarian supervisor can exacerbate feelings of dissatisfaction and pressure, increasing the likelihood of turnover.

In a collectivist culture like Malaysia, where interpersonal relationships, harmony, and respect for authority are highly valued, the role of supervisor support becomes even more critical. Malaysian academicians who perceive their supervisors as genuinely interested in their professional growth and well-being are more likely to feel a strong sense of loyalty not just to their supervisors but to the university as a whole.

Conceptually, the theoretical foundation of the inclusion of supervisor support as one of the predictors of turnover intention is based on social exchange and LMX theories. As earlier, the LMX and SET conceptualization have a convergent logic of operation in which support from the superior elicits positive reciprocation from the subordinate in the form of lowered turnover intention. In academic settings, especially in private universities in Malaysia where job and financial insecurity are common problems, supervisor support provides a critical intrinsic reward to the academician. In the form of mentorship, encouragement, and opportunity creation, supervisor support increases job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and psychological well-being. Grounded on these two theoretical perspectives and in context of Malaysian private universities where intrinsic factors might serve as the compensatory factors for the non-competitive salaries, supervisor support is included as one of the independent variables to predict the turnover intention of academicians both directly and indirectly via continuance commitment.

2.8 Employee Recognition

Employee recognition, as an intrinsic reward, encompasses both formal and informal appreciation of contributions. This could take the form of verbal praise, performance awards, and symbolic gestures of gratitude. Recognition differs from monetary incentives, as it fulfills higher-order psychological needs including esteem, belonging, and self-actualization. This is supported by Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory, which both position recognition as a primary source of satisfaction and a key driver of retention. Recognition also has strong links to social exchange theory (SET): when workers are recognized and feel appreciated, cared for, and respected by the organization, they reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors, such as loyalty, commitment, and low turnover intention.

Recognition plays a crucial role in influencing turnover intention. When employees perceive that their efforts are noticed and valued by the organization, they

are more likely to feel motivated, satisfied, and committed, which reduces turnover intention. On the other hand, employees who feel unrecognized, unappreciated, or neglected tend to develop a negative image of the organization, lower morale, and actively look for other opportunities (Brunetto et al., 2022). Recognition of teaching, research, and service excellence is therefore of paramount importance to employee morale and commitment in academic institutions (Zakaria et al., 2021; Ahmad et al., 2021).

Empirical evidence has emerged on the importance of recognition for retention. Jo et al. (2025) found that recognition significantly increased employee engagement, job satisfaction, and reduced burnout, all of which lowered turnover intention. Saxena (2025) underscored that among various human resource strategies, recognition programs (such as employee of the month, service awards, and so on) are among the most cost-effective ways to boost morale and retention across industries. In addition, Mishra (2017) established that recognition is instrumental in retaining Gen Y employees, who are particularly sensitive to the appreciation and acknowledgement of their contributions.

In addition to theoretical rationales, empirical research recently has underscored the pivotal role of recognition. Jo et al. (2025) found that recognition significantly increased employee engagement, job satisfaction, and reduced burnout, all of which lowered turnover intention. Saxena (2025) similarly emphasized that among various human resource strategies, recognition programs (such as employee of the month, service awards, and so on) are among the most cost-effective ways to boost morale and retention across industries, especially in cases where financial resources were constrained. In addition, younger employees, such as Gen Y and millennials, have been shown to place a high value on recognition as a determinant of retention. They are more likely to stay in an organization if they feel that their contributions are acknowledged and valued (Mabaso & Mathebula, 2025; Ndiango, 2024).

García-Cabrera et al. (2023) further pointed out that supervisor recognition of individual contributions strengthened perceptions of fairness and organizational support, which directly decreased turnover intentions. In addition, Rahman et al. (2023) reported that recognition embedded into the reward systems of Malaysian higher education institutions reduced voluntary turnover by enhancing both affective and continuance commitment. In sum, these findings suggest that recognition is not merely

a symbolic act, but rather operates through well-established psychological mechanisms to suppress turnover intention.

Employee recognition holds unique significance in the context of private universities in Malaysia. Relative to public institutions, these universities are often constrained in terms of resources and human capital, resulting in their inability to match the level of remuneration and job security that more established public universities can offer. In this regard, intrinsic rewards such as recognition become primary levers of retention (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2020). Academicians are often required to shoulder heavy workloads in terms of teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities; when their efforts are recognized by supervisors and the institution — be it through performance awards, promotions, or even informal verbal acknowledgments — they are likely to experience a sense of loyalty and engagement. Conversely, the absence of recognition can trigger a sense of disengagement, dissatisfaction, and eventually turnover intention.

The significance of recognition also extends to shaping organizational culture and fostering collegiality and collective identity. This cultural aspect is important in an academic context, where collaboration and long-term career development play a central role. When institutions integrate recognition into their human resource practices, it creates an environment where employees not only feel valued for their outcomes (such as publications) but also for their teaching excellence, mentorship, and service contributions.

Therefore, as the literature suggests, recognition directly and indirectly influences turnover intention in the model. On the one hand, recognition may exert a direct effect on turnover intention by eliciting a sense of value, respect, and care for employees. For example, when academicians in private universities feel that their efforts and achievements are noticed and appreciated by supervisors, peers, and the institution (through verbal praise, awards, promotions, or other forms of recognition), they are likely to develop a positive attitude toward the organization and a lower likelihood of leaving. On the other hand, recognition can also have an indirect effect on turnover intention by influencing mediators such as satisfaction and affective commitment. The concept of satisfaction has long been established in the retention literature as a crucial mediator of turnover. When employees receive recognition, they are more likely to be satisfied with their job, as they feel that their work is valued and meaningful. Satisfaction is also closely related to affective commitment, as employees who are satisfied with their job are more likely to develop an emotional attachment to

the organization and its goals. Hence, employee recognition can be theorized to impact turnover through these interrelated pathways.

2.9 Social Exchange Theory

Homans began his work as a sociologist before becoming known as the creator of social exchange theory. He was motivated by small group interactions (Trevino, 2009). Nonetheless, his study evolved into a social psychology method due to his interest in his work with social exchange theory. Homans' work had an individualistic stance, claiming that social interactions take place depending on individual rewards. He was inspired by the Hawthorne study studies and the behavioural research of B.F. Skinner (Cook et al., 2013).

In accordance with social exchange theory, an exchange framework underlies every social interaction. In line with the social exchange hypothesis, when engaging in human interactions, people maximise their benefits and minimise their costs (Emerson, 1976). Furthermore, when one party benefits from another, they feel obligated to reciprocate in order to keep up this profitable trade relationship. Blau (1964) thought that the social exchange theory, which postulates that fair levels of rewards given to employees may signal that organisations are willing to invest in their employees and also care about their wellbeing, can support the significant role of organisational commitment as a mediating variable in the relationship between reward systems and employees' intention to leave their jobs.

People are motivated to strike a balance between what they provided and what they gained (Blau, 1964). He contends in his social exchange theory that people will make efforts to erase any perceived difference between what was given and what was acquired by their activities (Molm, 2003). As a result, those who get favours tend to return the favour by acting in a way that benefits the other party, and vice versa. Based on this view, the connection between workers and their employers can be described as a transaction including social and economic elements. In actuality, voluntary activities taken with the hope that they will be reciprocated in kind are what define exchange relationships within organisations (Köksal, 2012).

Interactions in an economic transaction are based on the exchange of goods and services that have different values from the values that the people involved are giving to them. Since economic advantage is the primary driving force, employees anticipate

receiving a certain set of money benefits in exchange for doing their job duties (Shore et al., 2009). For this reason, in economic exchanges, both the resources that are exchanged and the expected acts from one another are identified (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Also, due to the impersonal nature of the exchange, it is not anticipated that either the employee or the company will invest in such connections (Shore et al., 2009)

Research have revealed strong connections between social interaction and loyalty (Shore, & Wayne, 1993; Hom et al., 2009). With regard to the continuous commitment, some people may believe that retaining their current position in the company would be more advantageous than taking on a new career elsewhere. In this case, the loss cannot be viewed solely from an economic perspective as it also includes a social component because people don't want to lose their allies or close companions. Hence, it is anticipated that continuous commitment would be linked to social change.

Economic exchange, as previously indicated, places a strong emphasis on the concrete aspects of organisational commitment, such as financial results. Since continuance commitment involves weighing the advantages of remaining in an organisation against its disadvantages, it is anticipated that this dimension will also be positively correlated with economic change. (Alzamelet al., 2020). Hence, in line with the social exchange theory, this study seeks to prove the extent of extrinsic and intrinsic reward systems received by employees in manoeuvring their continuance commitment towards predicting turnover intention

2.10 Conceptual Framework Overview

The conceptual framework guiding this study integrates both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards as determinants of turnover intention, mediated by continuance commitment. Drawing upon prior frameworks (Mendis, 2017; Alhajjar et al., 2020), the model positions five independent variables remuneration, cash incentives, work–life balance, supervisor support, and employee recognition as predictors of academicians' intention to stay or leave their institutions. The framework is grounded in **social exchange theory** (Blau, 1964) and **total rewards theory** (Armstrong, 2020), both of which emphasize that employees evaluate their employment relationships not only based on monetary compensation but also on the broader set of rewards and support provided by their institutions. By combining extrinsic and intrinsic variables within one

model, the framework seeks to provide a holistic explanation of why academicians choose to stay or leave.

2.10.1 Independent Variables

Remuneration represents the tangible economic benefits that form the basis of the employment contract. In contexts where job security is uncertain, such as Malaysian private universities, these financial rewards provide not only livelihood support but also a sense of organizational investment (Rahman et al., 2023). Fair and transparent pay systems reduce dissatisfaction, while inconsistent or inadequate compensation has been shown to escalate turnover intention (Chen et al., 2023).

Work–life balance, supervisor support and employee recognition have been placed under intrinsic rewards in this study, as these elements pertain to the quality of work experience that employees get during their employment. Work–life balance enables employees to reduce their stress and role conflict (Xu et al., 2024), supervisor support contributes to trust and well-being (García-Cabrera et al., 2023), and recognition provides employees' needs for appreciation and belonging (Jo et al., 2025). All three variables go beyond the economic exchange and target the socio-emotional aspects in the employment relationship, meeting the important needs that are not satisfied by extrinsic rewards.

2.10.2 Mediating Variable

Central to the framework is the mediating role of continuance commitment, as conceptualized by Meyer and Allen (1991). Continuance commitment reflects employees' recognition of the economic and social costs associated with leaving the organization. In the present framework, continuance commitment is theorized to explain how and why both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards influence turnover intention.

Therefore, the extrinsic reward, for example, remuneration, continuance commitment is reflected in the belief that one will suffer a financial loss in the event of resignation (Lee & Teo, 2021). In the case of intrinsic rewards (supervisor support, appreciation), continuance commitment is formed by relational investment and psychological attachment and also increases the cost of resignation in social and career terms (Rahman et al., 2023). As a result, continuance commitment can be viewed as a

psychological mechanism that connects the organizational reward system with the employee turnover decision. Without this mediator, the impact of rewards might be more fragmented or inconsistent across different settings.

2.10.3 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is turnover intention, which is the conscious and deliberate wilfulness of the employees to leave their current organization. Turnover intention is defined as the strongest predictor of actual turnover in most of the literature. The framework defines the turnover intention as the dependent variable, the conscious and deliberate wilfulness of the employees to leave their current organization. Turnover intention is widely considered the best predictor of actual turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Meyer & Allen, 2022). This study's context is Malaysian private universities, where there is a shortage of human capital, especially in the academics division, and they are competing with the public universities for the talent; thus, more practical implication can be derived from turnover intention to come up with better retention strategies.

2.10.4 Integrative Perspective

Consistent with social exchange theory and total rewards theory, this framework accounts for the reality that employees are not only motivated by financial returns from the organization but also non-financial ones. The inclusion of continuance commitment as a mediator also aligns with the psychological process at play during retention, where rewards serve not only to satisfy employees but also to raise the perceived cost of leaving an organization, thus reducing turnover intention. The conceptual framework provides an overarching and integrative lens through which to examine turnover intention. It offers a broader perspective than unidimensional analyses that focus solely on pay or benefits. By considering both extrinsic and intrinsic factors, and by contextualizing these within the specific environmental pressures faced by employees in Malaysian private universities, the framework presents a more nuanced understanding of the issue at hand. The position of continuance commitment as a mediator also recognizes that the influence of rewards on retention may not be direct but can occur by altering employees' perception of what they stand to lose if they were to leave.

In this way, the framework does not just synthesize the empirical evidence presented so far, but it also contributes to the theoretical discourse by bringing together extrinsic and intrinsic factors under a common mechanism of commitment. It also sets a solid foundation for hypothesis development and empirical testing in the following chapters.

2.11 Operational Definition of Conceptual Framework

This study employs both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards as independent variables, continuance commitment as a mediating variable, and turnover intention as the dependent variable. Each construct is operationalized to reflect the context of Malaysian private university academicians. The operational definitions outlined below ensure conceptual clarity and measurement consistency aligned with established theories such as Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), Total Rewards Theory (Armstrong, 2020), and Meyer and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model of Commitment.

2.11.1 Remuneration

Remuneration refers to the total monetary compensation employees receive from their organization, including basic pay, salary increments, allowances, and benefits (Rahman et al., 2023). In this study, remuneration is operationalized as academicians' perceptions of the fairness, adequacy, and competitiveness of their pay and benefits relative to their workload and market standards. This construct is measured through indicators assessing satisfaction with pay fairness, perceived adequacy of salary and allowances, and alignment between effort and compensation. Grounded in Equity Theory and Expectancy Theory, remuneration serves as a key extrinsic motivator influencing employees' perceptions of organizational justice, thereby reducing turnover intention when perceived as equitable and transparent (Chen et al., 2023; Stofberg, 2022).

2.11.2 Work–Life Balance

Work–life balance (WLB) refers to the extent to which individuals can manage their work roles and family roles or personal life (Xu et al., 2024). In this study, WLB is conceptualized as academicians' perceptions of their organization's flexibility, reasonable workload, and support for their personal and family life. It is measured using indicators that evaluate scheduling flexibility, work demands, and perceived organizational concern for employee well-being. Grounded in Role Conflict Theory and the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model, WLB serves as an intrinsic reward that mitigates stress and promotes organizational attachment, thereby reducing turnover intention (Yu et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2023).

2.11.3 Supervisor Support

Supervisor support refers to employees' perceptions of the degree to which their immediate supervisors provide empathy, constructive feedback, professional guidance, and advocacy in achieving work-related goals (García-Cabrera et al., 2023). In the context of this study, supervisor support is operationalized as the academicians' perception of their supervisors' willingness to assist, mentor, and recognize their contributions, particularly in managing academic workload and career progression. Measured through indicators on supervisor empathy, fairness, and supportiveness, this construct draws on Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) Theory and Social Exchange Theory, which assert that positive supervisory relationships enhance trust, job satisfaction, and commitment, thereby mitigating turnover intention (Fukui, 2019; Swanzy, 2020).

2.11.4 Employee Recognition

Employee recognition is the acknowledgment and appreciation of employees' contributions and achievements through formal or informal means such as awards, verbal praise, or institutional acknowledgment (Jo et al., 2025; Saxena, 2025). Within this study, recognition is operationalized as academicians' perceptions of how their universities value and appreciate their academic performance and contributions. It is measured through indicators examining frequency, fairness, and sincerity of

recognition, as well as its impact on motivation and morale. Guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, recognition functions as an intrinsic motivator that fulfills employees' esteem needs and fosters affective commitment, consequently reducing turnover intention (Rahman et al., 2023).

2.11.5 Continuance Commitment (Mediating Variable)

Continuance commitment reflects employees' perceived costs associated with leaving their organization, encompassing both financial and social investments (Meyer & Allen, 1991). For this study, it is defined as the extent to which academicians perceive that leaving their current institution would result in significant losses such as financial stability, professional relationships, or institutional benefits. Measurement indicators include perceptions of economic and career-related costs, availability of alternatives, and investment in current employment. The inclusion of continuance commitment as a mediating variable is theoretically grounded in Organizational Commitment Theory, suggesting that rewards influence turnover intention indirectly by reinforcing employees' perceived dependence on their current institution (Lee & Teo, 2021; Al-Abrrow et al., 2022).

2.11.6 Turnover Intention (Dependent Variable)

Turnover intention denotes employees' conscious and deliberate consideration of leaving their organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993). In this study, turnover intention is operationalized as the self-reported likelihood of academicians considering, planning, or seeking alternative employment within a specified period. It is measured through indicators assessing thoughts of quitting, search for other opportunities, and the probability of leaving within a year. As widely supported in organizational behavior literature, turnover intention serves as the strongest predictor of actual turnover behavior (Meyer & Allen, 2022), making it a critical outcome variable for evaluating institutional retention strategies.

2.12 Conceptual Framework

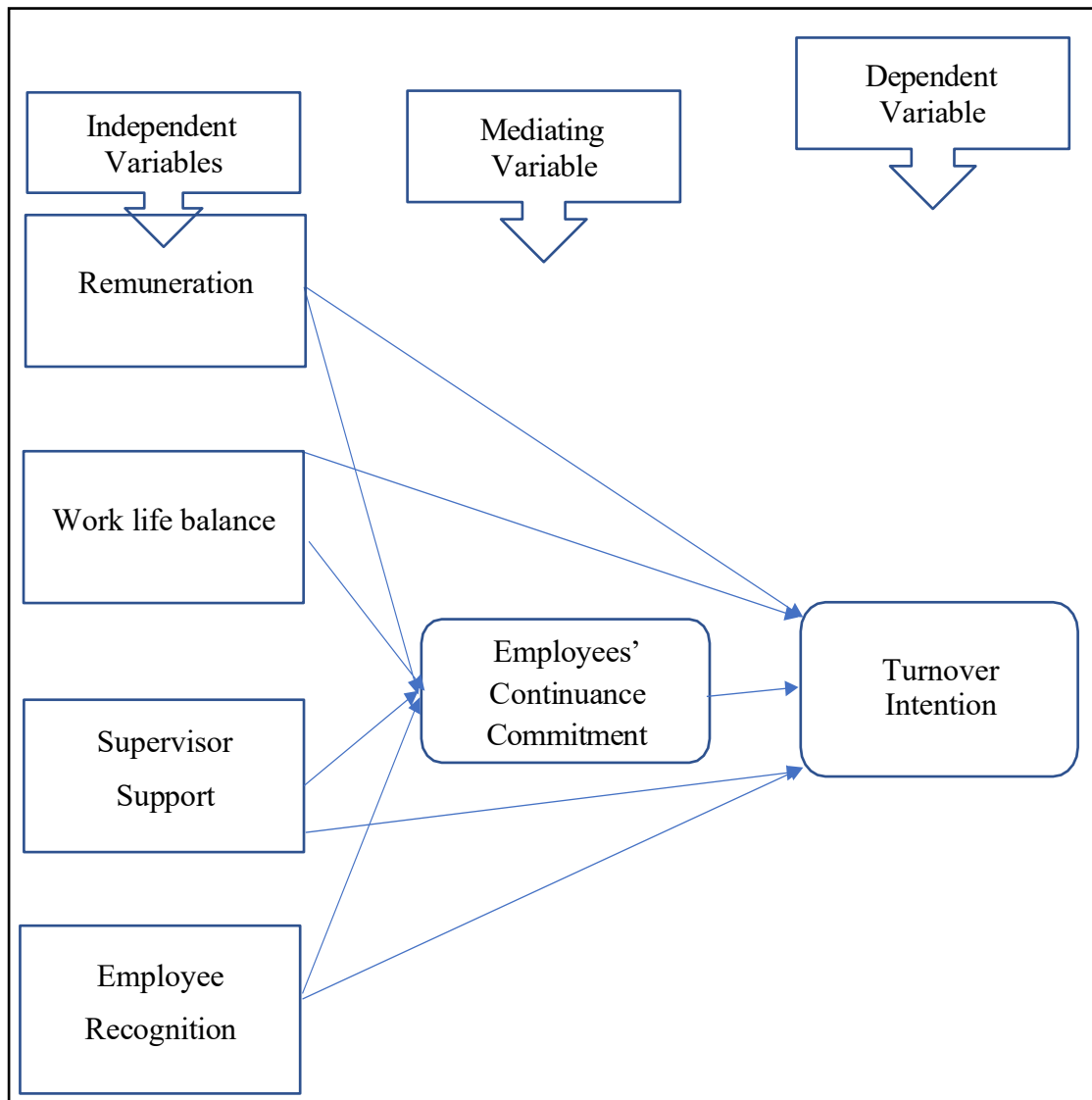


Figure 2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.13 Hypothesis Development

H1: There is a positive relationship between remuneration and turnover intention.

Remuneration is another type of extrinsic reward found to have a strong influence on employees' attitudes toward their organization. According to equity theory and SET (Blau, 1964), remuneration is a signal of how the organization treats its employees in terms of fairness, recognition of contribution, and investment in them. When employees perceive their salary as commensurate with their skills, responsibilities, and market value, they tend to exhibit more loyalty and less intention

to leave (Chen et al., 2023). On the other hand, perceived pay inequity has been linked to higher dissatisfaction, lower trust, and increased turnover intention (Rahman et al., 2023).

The importance of remuneration as a predictor of retention has been confirmed by several studies. For example, Yusoff et al. (2020) found that a fair and competitive remuneration policy was one of the main drivers of employees' commitment and retention at Malaysian private universities. Stofberg (2022) showed that a transparent remuneration system can lower turnover intention through perceived organizational support. In terms of expectancy theory, fair and adequate remuneration also plays a motivational role—employees are more committed when they believe their efforts will be adequately rewarded with money (Vroom, 1964).

In this research, remuneration is also expected to be positively related to employee retention (i.e., higher remuneration is associated with lower turnover intention).

H2: There is a positive relationship between work–life balance and turnover intention.

Work–life balance (WLB) refers to the extent to which an employee is able to successfully fulfill their work and personal roles without experiencing high levels of conflict. According to the job demands–resources (JD–R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), WLB is a job resource that can buffer stress and burnout, which in turn, will minimize withdrawal behaviors. If organizations have policies and practices that support flexible working hours, leaves of absence, and reduced workload, employees are more likely to be satisfied with their job and not want to leave.

There is empirical evidence to support this assertion. A recent study by Xu et al. (2024) revealed that WLB was negatively related to turnover intentions, mediated by increased job satisfaction and engagement. A similar conclusion was drawn in the study by Yu, Lee, and Na (2022). In their cross-sectional survey, they found that organizations that provided family-friendly programs and practices were able to retain more employees. The reason was because these programs and practices helped minimize employees' work–family conflict. In Malaysia, Rahman et al. (2023) examined the perceptions of academicians in various higher learning institutions. They found that academicians with high levels of WLB perceived themselves as more committed to their work and had lower levels of turnover intentions. This effect was more pronounced in

private institutions, where there is more pressure to perform in terms of teaching and publishing.

Role conflict theory can be used to rationalize this effect. Role conflict is said to produce strain that makes employees want to leave the organization. Therefore, organizations that are able to improve the WLB of their employees will be able to elicit higher levels of commitment and lower turnover intentions.

H3: There is a positive relationship between supervisor support and turnover intention.

Supervisor support is the extent to which employees believe that their supervisors care about them, empathize with their issues, and are concerned with their professional development. Leader–member exchange (LMX) theory predicts that a high-quality supervisor–employee relationship would build reciprocal trust and emotional attachment, which would make turnover less likely. According to social exchange theory, if employees receive consistent guidance and recognition from their supervisor, they will have an obligation to reciprocate this support with commitment and loyalty (García-Cabrera et al., 2023).

Studies have indeed found this effect. Fukui (2019) showed that supervisor support reduced turnover intention by increasing psychological safety. Swanzy (2020) reported that supervisor empathy and communication had a positive effect on employees' well-being, which in turn was associated with a reduced turnover intention. In Malaysia, Rahman et al. (2023) reported that academic staff who perceived that their supervisors gave them constructive feedback and fair evaluations exhibited lower turnover intentions despite their job insecurity.

In sum, if supervisors maintain a supportive work climate, employees will develop a stronger sense of being valued and become more attached to the organization, which will make turnover less likely.

H4: There is a positive relationship between employee recognition and turnover intention.

Recognition is an intrinsic type of reward that offers acknowledgement of employees' efforts and achievements through verbal appreciation, awards, or institutional praise. It satisfies the fundamental human needs for esteem and belonging

(Maslow, 1954) and aligns with Herzberg's two-factor theory, where recognition is a "motivator" that leads to satisfaction and retention.

Recent research has consistently identified recognition as a predictor of reduced turnover intention. Jo et al. (2025) found that recognition significantly improved engagement and job satisfaction, thereby lowering turnover intention. Saxena (2025) reported that recognition programs are among the most cost-effective strategies for retaining skilled employees in competitive environments. Furthermore, Rahman et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of recognition in academic institutions, where it strengthened affective and continuance commitment, particularly among academicians who highly value acknowledgment for scholarly achievements.

In Malaysian private universities, recognition may play a crucial role as an additional reward that enhances the psychological return and is especially valuable when monetary incentives are constrained.

H5: There is a positive relationship between employees' continuance commitment and turnover intention.

Continuance commitment is based on the employees' awareness of the cost of leaving an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). If employees think that they can lose rewards, relationships, or career if they resign, they are less likely to intend to quit. The three-component model of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Allen, 2022) defines continuance commitment as a stabilizer, which keeps the employees in the organization for investments and sunk costs.

Research has empirically proven this correlation. Lee and Teo (2021) found that continuance commitment negatively predicted turnover intention and served as a mediator between rewards and retention. In another study, Mohd Yusoff et al. (2020) have found that continuance commitment was one of the most prominent retention predictors among Malaysian private university workers. Admittedly, continuance commitment has been claimed to be a neutral commitment that does not have the power to increase performance (Asim et al., 2021), but it is an important predictor of turnover (Asim et al., 2021). Thus, employees with higher continuance commitment are less likely to leave the organizations, so there is a positive relationship between continuance commitment and retention.

H6: Employees' continuance commitment negatively mediates the relationship between remuneration and turnover intention.

Remuneration is likely to shape continuance commitment to mediate turnover intention. Continuance commitment turns financial satisfaction into obligation or leaving cost. When workers are remunerated better, they will feel the economic loss they will bear if they leave and therefore avoid turnover (Rahman et al., 2023). Lee and Teo (2021) showed that continuance commitment partially mediates the relationship between remuneration and turnover intention. It means that financial reward retains workers by increasing perceived dependence on the organization. Consequently, higher remuneration boosts continuance commitment that, in turn, decreases turnover intention.

H6a: Employees' continuance commitment negatively mediates the relationship between work–life balance and turnover intention.

Employees who experience better work–life balance perceive their organization as supportive, fostering emotional and psychological investments that enhance continuance commitment. This perception increases the costs of leaving, as employees associate their work environment with stability and well-being. Xu et al. (2024) and Rahman et al. (2023) both confirmed that WLB indirectly affects turnover intention through commitment mechanisms, validating the mediating role of continuance commitment. Therefore, improved WLB strengthens employees' continuance commitment, which in turn reduces their turnover intentions.

H6b: Employees' continuance commitment negatively mediates the relationship between supervisor support and turnover intention.

Supervisor support fulfills employees' needs for belongingness and trust, encouraging them to form psychological investments in the organization. Such relational investments underpin continuance commitment by increasing the costs of leaving an environment where employees have received supervisor support. The results of Fukui (2019) and García-Cabrera et al. (2023) suggest that supervisor support indirectly affects turnover intention through commitment and satisfaction, providing support for the mediating pathway. Therefore, continuance commitment serves as a mechanism through which supervisor support reduces turnover intentions.

H6c: Employees' continuance commitment negatively mediates the relationship between employee recognition and turnover intention.

Employee recognition leads to emotional attachment and sense of belonging, increasing continuance commitment by reinforcing employees' perception that leaving would result in losing appreciation and status. Jo et al. (2025) and Saxena (2025) confirmed that recognition improves commitment, which in turn has an indirect relationship with turnover intention. In a similar way, Rahman et al. (2023) discovered that recognition programs in higher education resulted in an increase in both affective and continuance commitment, which has revealed the mediating role. As a result, it is anticipated that employees' continuance commitment would have a negative mediating effect on the relationship between recognition and turnover intention.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology that will be used for the study. There are six major sections in this chapter that methodically arranged to explain the thorough procedure of the study. This chapter begins with the explanation of research design that consists of six crucial constituents beginning with purpose of the study, followed by type of investigation, setting, time of horizon, unit of analysis, and interference. The next section of the study details out the population and sampling, measurement or instrumentation, data collection, data analysis and lastly, the conclusion. Particularly, this section of the study will provide explanation on the sampling frame, statistical techniques and sample size that will be used to facilitate this study. Furthermore, data analysis technique (PLS-SEM) will also be thoroughly discussed in this section followed by the final summary of the chapter.

3.2 Research Philosophy

A research philosophy is a viewpoint on the methods that should be utilised to collect, analyse, and apply data regarding a topic. In contrast to doxology, which refers to what is believed to be true, the term "epistemology" refers to what is known to be true. Accordingly, doxa to episteme is the process by which science converts what is believed into what is known. In the Western tradition of science, positivist also known as scientific, and interpretivist sometimes known as anti-positivist are two important research theories (Galliers, 1991). The positivist ideology based on the Onion Model by Saunders et al. (2016) which was founded on the belief that anything that exists can be validated through experiments, observations, mathematical justification, or logical support, was employed in this study.

3.3 Research Design

This study employs a research design framework as proposed by Sekaran and Bougie (2016), which is a proper approach for empirical investigations in social sciences, particularly in organizational research. The research design is a roadmap that details the collection, measurement, and analysis of data, thus making sure that the research questions are answered systematically, and comprehensively.

3.3.1 Overview of Research Design

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), solid research design contains precise expressions of the purpose of the research, the type of the investigation, the extent of researcher interference, the study setting, the unit of analysis, and the time horizon of the study. This study is oriented in the light of these elements in order to ensure the proper and methodologically sound approach to establishing the connection between reward systems, turnover intention, and continuance commitment among Malaysian private university academicians.

3.3.2 Purpose of the Study

This study is launched to analyze the variables of reward systems in influencing turnover intention among academicians with the mediator of continuance commitment in the Malaysian's Private Universities. Both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are taken into accounts for this study. According to Mar et al. (2020) understanding how intrinsic and extrinsic rewards affect turnover intention can have a substantial impact on how the human resources department approaches the problem of turnover intention. Furthermore, the element of continuance commitment is used as a mediating variable between the relationship of reward systems and turnover intention. Therefore, this study is set to test out all the hypothesis centered upon the established relationships. According to Kunwar (2021) a hypothesis testing is an important aspect of the scientific method that enables a systematic approach in assessing theories through observations and regulating the probability of the assert statements to be true or false. According to Kolawole and Sekumade (2017) a hypothesis testing is relevant in the field of social science research as it is vital to rule out chances or assumptions as a likely explanation

for the findings of a research study because human reasoning is complex and unpredictable.

3.3.3 Type of Investigation

This research is considered a correlational type of research as the primary goal of this research is to analyze the strength of relationship between variables as well as the cause and effect of the mediating variable established. According to Seeram (2019) correlational research is a form of non-experimental research that makes it easier to predict and explain how distinct variables relate to one another. Researcher used a correlational research design to determine the degree of connection between the variables. Furthermore, correlational research can precisely reveal the interaction between specific variables and the kind of interaction that takes place hence, enabling the researcher to make predictions based on the correlations found. (Queirós et al., 2017).

3.3.4 Research Setting

Research setting refers to the environment and experimental setup that take place during the research observation. Based on the book written by Sekaran and Bougie exploring the elements of research design (2016), simply indicates that correlational studies are conducted in non- contrived settings or in a natural setting. In this study, naturalistic observation is taken place to collect the data from the sample populations. The participants are inquired to answer online surveys in their natural state of environment without any interference from the researcher.

3.3.5 Time Horizon

Time horizon in research design refers to the timeframe pertinent to the research during the period in when the researcher is studying the population (Zain Alamgeer, 2022). This research is considered as a cross-sectional study due to its observational nature and limited time frame. Therefore, in a cross-sectional study, the measurement of the results and exposures are being done simultaneously (Wang & Cheng, 2020). Cross-sectional study is usually time and cost effective to conduct and it also useful for

developing hypotheses and offering details on the frequency of exposure and results that guide the design of other studies (Wang & Cheng, 2020).

3.3.6 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in research refers to the person or object that the researcher uses to collect data. According to Kumar (2018) unit of analysis provide clearance to who and what is being studied in the research. It involves either individual, groups of individuals, organization of individuals, organizations of individuals, countries, technologies, and objects that are the focus of the observation (DeCarlo, 2018). The sample population used for this study consists of groups of academics designate and categorized by their academic title or position. Therefore, the unit analysis for this study is that group of academicians from the public universities in the north region of Malaysia.

3.3.7 Interference

The degree of research interference has a direct correlation with the type of study being done. According to Sekaran and Bougie, (2016) in correlational type of studies there are minimal interference by the researcher due to its natural setting of observation. The primary intention of cross-sectional study in relevance to this study is to observe the relationships between variables associated with the issue therefore a natural setting of observation with minimal interference by the researcher serve its purpose in gaining quality findings.

3.4 Sampling Strategy

This study employed a purposive and judgemental sampling strategy, which falls under the category of non-probability sampling. This approach was selected because the research aims to obtain deep insights into the relationship between reward systems, continuance commitment, and turnover intention among academicians in Malaysian private universities. Unlike probability sampling, which emphasizes representativeness and generalization, purposive and judgemental sampling emphasizes information richness and contextual depth. According to Palinkas et al. (2015),

purposive sampling is particularly suitable for studies seeking to explore complex organizational phenomena in specific institutional settings, allowing researchers to select cases that are most relevant to the research objectives. Similarly, Campbell et al. (2020) argue that purposive selection facilitates theoretical generalization rather than statistical inference, which aligns with the aims of the present research.

In this study, purposive sampling was used to deliberately select respondents and institutions possessing characteristics most pertinent to the research problem. Specifically, the study focused on academicians employed in private universities that demonstrate established reputational standing, structured human resource systems, and transparent reward practices. Judgemental sampling complemented this process by allowing the researcher to apply informed discretion and expert judgment when identifying cases that best represented the study population. As Ntona et al. (2023) note, judgemental sampling involves deliberate researcher choices guided by both theoretical criteria and contextual insight. This approach is often employed in higher education research, where researchers seek to capture organizational realities from participants and institutions that embody specific structural and cultural conditions relevant to the inquiry (Kadence, 2024).

The sampling frame consisted of four private universities located in the Klang Valley, all of which were listed in the 2022 QS World University Rankings. The decision to select these universities was both theoretically and pragmatically grounded. From a theoretical standpoint, universities ranked in the QS World University Rankings represent institutions with established academic reputation, international visibility, and structured human resource management systems (QS Top Universities, 2022). These characteristics align closely with the study's variables—reward systems, continuance commitment, and turnover intention—making these universities highly suitable cases for examination. By selecting institutions with recognized ranking status, the study ensured that the sample reflected environments where reward policies, incentive schemes, and retention strategies are formalized, thereby enhancing the validity and relevance of the findings (Cash et al., 2022).

Geographically, focusing on the Klang Valley was methodologically advantageous because it is Malaysia's principal higher education hub, housing the largest concentration of private universities. This regional focus enhances comparability among sampled institutions while controlling for contextual variations in state-level policy, economic conditions, and institutional regulations. Cash et al. (2022) highlight

that purposive case selection within a geographically bounded area strengthens internal validity by holding constant extraneous variables, thereby allowing clearer interpretation of causal mechanisms. The Klang Valley setting also facilitates practical feasibility and accessibility, which are essential for effective data collection. As Palinkas et al. (2015) emphasize, purposive selection must balance theoretical relevance with pragmatic feasibility to ensure access to information-rich participants and high-quality data.

While purposive and judgemental sampling does not permit statistical generalization, it allows for analytical and theoretical generalization, which is appropriate for this research. The goal is not to represent all Malaysian universities but to derive transferable insights applicable to comparable higher education institutions. To minimize potential bias inherent in non-probability sampling, the selection process was guided by explicit inclusion criteria: (1) the institution must be a private university, (2) it must appear in the 2022 QS World University Rankings, and (3) it must be geographically situated in the Klang Valley. This transparent and replicable criterion-based approach reduced subjectivity in sample selection, enhancing methodological rigor and trustworthiness (Ntona et al., 2023). Furthermore, by selecting four universities rather than a single case, the study followed a small-N comparative logic, which improves analytic robustness and allows for pattern identification across cases (Cash et al., 2022).

To enhance the credibility of findings, triangulation was applied across data sources and participant categories. Data were obtained from multiple academicians from different field of expertise and supplemented with institutional documentation when available. Triangulation mitigates single-source bias and reinforces the validity of findings in purposive sampling designs (Palinkas et al., 2015). Ethical considerations were also central to the sampling process. Permissions were obtained from relevant institutional authorities, and participants were informed about the study's purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary nature. All data were handled in accordance with research ethics protocols to ensure anonymity and integrity.

In summary, the use of purposive and judgemental sampling in this study is methodologically justified. It allows for the deliberate selection of institutions that best represent the characteristics under investigation, enhances contextual understanding, and balances rigor with feasibility. By focusing on QS-ranked private universities in the Klang Valley, this study ensures that the selected institutions are both theoretically relevant and practically accessible. Although this sampling technique does not aim for

statistical representativeness, it provides a strong analytical foundation for theoretical generalization, allowing the study to make meaningful contributions to understanding reward systems, continuance commitment, and turnover intention within the Malaysian private higher education sector.

Table 3.1
Total Population of Academician in Four Selected Malaysian Private Universities

Institution	Taylor's University	UCSI University (University College Sedaya International)	Management and Science University (MSU)	Sunway University	TOTAL
No. of Academicians	590	500	700	516	2306
Sample Size			331		

In order to collect the data for this study, each individual unit of analysis that targeted academicians as the respondent was used. The representatives from each university received the questionnaires personally. The methodical empirical methodology known as quantitative research design was used to study social phenomena that were being studied statistically or quantitatively (Spector, 2019). Thus, this form of research design was used in this study. The data for the cross-sectional study was gathered at a single point in time. The benefit of cross-sectional research is that even from foundation of a representative sample, the findings could be applied to the entire population (Spector, 2019). As a result, it was reliable and valid to draw conclusions about the subject of the study and indirectly serves as a subservient reference for others.

There are 2306 academics in total at the chosen Malaysian Private Universities. The required sample size was determined based on the population size, as presented in Appendix A (Table A1). The researcher uses the table created by Krecie and Morgan (1970) for calculating sample size to find the sample size for academicians. This table indicates that the sample size is 331 for a population of 2400. Therefore, this study took on the stated sample size for the study. Cochran (1977) recommended to choose the largest estimated sample size when calculating the required sample sizes

based on the formulated table by Krecie and Morgan (1970). The rules are displayed in Table A1 in appendix.

3.5 Questionnaire Design and Instrumentation

The present study employed a structured questionnaire to measure the relationships between the independent variables (remuneration, cash incentives, work–life balance, supervisor support, and employee recognition), the mediating variable (continuance commitment), and the dependent variable (turnover intention). The instrument was adapted from validated scales in previous studies to ensure both content validity and contextual relevance to Malaysian private universities. The questionnaire was divided into four parts: demographic information, reward system items (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), continuance commitment items, and turnover intention items. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The adaptation process involved reviewing established instruments from previous empirical studies and modifying them to suit the higher education context. Minor wording adjustments were made to ensure semantic clarity and alignment with academic employment settings. No major structural changes were made to the scale dimensions to preserve construct validity. Items with overlapping meanings, redundancy, or contextually irrelevant phrasing were carefully removed based on expert review feedback. This adaptation approach follows methodological recommendations by DeVellis (2017) and Boateng et al. (2018), emphasizing the need to maintain theoretical fidelity while ensuring contextual sensitivity in measurement development.

To minimize common method bias (CMB), several control measures were implemented in the survey design. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality to reduce evaluation apprehension. The questionnaire mixed positively and negatively worded items to avoid pattern response tendencies. Additionally, the survey sequence was structured according to the conceptual framework, progressing from independent variables to the mediating and dependent variables. This logical arrangement reduces cognitive fatigue and enhances response consistency (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

The adapted instrument's structure and item sources are summarized below. Each table presents the original measurement items, modified items, and source(s) from which they were adopted.

Table 3.2
Measurement for Remuneration

Original Items	Modified Items	Sources
The salary I earn is adequate to meet my needs which makes me stay.	I decided to stay because the salary I earn is adequate to meet my needs	Ekabu (2019)
My employer offers attractive house allowance which encourages me to remain.	My employer provides attractive housing allowance that motivates me to stay.	Ekabu (2019)
My employer offers attractive travel allowance which encourages me to stay.	My employer provides travel allowance that supports my decision to remain.	Ekabu (2019)
The remuneration is competitive which encourages me to stay in teaching.	My remuneration is competitive compared to similar institutions, motivating me to stay.	Ekabu (2019)
Salary raises are regular which motivates me to stay.	I receive regular salary increments that influence my intention to stay.	Ekabu (2019)

Table 3.3
Measurement for Work–Life Balance

Original Items	Modified Items	Sources
I feel that I am able to balance my work life properly.	I am able to balance my academic work and personal life effectively.	Al Kabir & Tirno (2018)
I am satisfied with my working hour in the organization.	I am satisfied with the workload and working hours in my institution.	Al Kabir & Tirno (2018)
I feel like I have enough time for my family since I started my job.	I have sufficient time for my family and personal life despite my academic duties.	Al Kabir & Tirno (2018)
I think that good work-life balance has a positive effect on my productivity.	Good work–life balance enhances my productivity and job satisfaction.	Al Kabir & Tirno (2018)
I think that the present work-life balance will be a major reason for me to leave my current job.	Poor work–life balance may influence my decision to leave this institution.	Al Kabir & Tirno (2018)

Table 3.4

Measurement for Supervisor Support

Original Items	Modified Items	Sources
Supervisors are genuinely concerned with the employees' welfare.	My supervisor genuinely cares about my well-being.	Setiawati & Suharti (2018)
Supervisors pay attention to personal goals and values.	My supervisor supports my personal and career development goals.	Setiawati & Suharti (2018)
Supervisors pay attention to my overall job satisfaction.	My supervisor shows concern for my overall job satisfaction.	Setiawati & Suharti (2018)
Supervisors are willing to assist employees when employees need special help.	My supervisor is willing to assist me when I face challenges.	Setiawati & Suharti (2018)
Supervisors provide positive support so that employees are able to show their best performance.	My supervisor provides constructive support to enhance my performance.	Setiawati & Suharti (2018)

Table 3.5

Measurement for Employee Recognition

Original Items	Modified Items	Sources
I am praised regularly for my work.	I am regularly praised for my academic performance and achievements.	Hussain et al. (2019); Mngomezulu et al. (2015)
I get credit for what I do.	My contributions to teaching and research are recognized and appreciated.	Hussain et al. (2019); Mngomezulu et al. (2015)
My employer gives recognition for good work done.	My institution acknowledges good academic and administrative performance.	Hussain et al. (2019)
I receive constructive criticism about my work.	I receive constructive feedback aimed at improving my work performance.	Hussain et al. (2019)
The employer makes me feel important.	My institution makes me feel valued for my contributions.	Hussain et al. (2019)

Table 3.6
Measurement for Continuance Commitment

Original Items	Modified Items	Sources
Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	Staying in my current institution is both a necessity and a preference.	Bonds (2017)
It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.	It would be difficult for me to leave my current institution, even if I desired to do so.	Bonds (2017)
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.	Leaving my current institution would disrupt many aspects of my professional and personal life.	Bonds (2017)
I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.	I perceive limited alternative employment options outside this institution.	Bonds (2017)
One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.	Leaving this institution would have negative consequences due to limited career alternatives.	Bonds (2017)

Table 3.7
Measurement for Turnover Intention

Original Items	Modified Items	Sources
I would quit my present job for a similar position with better pay in another organization at the least opportunity.	I would leave my current institution for a similar position with better pay at the earliest opportunity.	Ali & Anwar (2021)
Continuation with my present employer will not fulfill my life expectation.	Continuing with my current institution will not fulfill my career expectations.	Ali & Anwar (2021)
As soon as I can find a better job, I will quit this organization.	I intend to leave this institution as soon as a better opportunity arises.	Ali & Anwar (2021)
I often think about quitting my job.	I frequently consider resigning from this institution.	Ali & Anwar (2021)
I will likely actively look for a new job in the next year.	I am likely to actively seek employment elsewhere within the next year.	Ali & Anwar (2021)

Table 3.8
Summary of Measurement Sources

Construct	Source(s)	No. of Items
Remuneration	Ekabu (2019)	5
Work–Life Balance	Al Kabir & Tirno (2018)	5
Supervisor Support	Setiawati & Suharti (2018)	5
Employee Recognition	Hussain et al. (2019); Mngomezulu et al. (2015)	5
Continuance Commitment	Bonds (2017)	5
Turnover Intention	Ali & Anwar (2021)	

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process for this study was systematically designed to align with the purposive and judgemental sampling technique employed. The process was carried out in several stages, beginning with the identification of the study population, followed by determining the appropriate sample size, developing the research instrument, distributing the survey, and finally conducting data screening and analysis. Each stage was executed carefully to ensure methodological rigor, ethical compliance, and data validity, consistent with the objectives of the study.

The first stage involved identifying the sampling population, which consisted of academicians from four selected Malaysian private universities listed in the 2022 QS Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings. These institutions were deliberately chosen because they represent reputable private universities located within the Klang Valley, a region widely recognised as the higher education hub of Malaysia. The purposive and judgemental sampling approach was deemed appropriate, as it allowed the selection of information-rich institutions that align with the study’s focus on the relationship between reward systems, continuance commitment, and turnover intention (Palinkas et al., 2020).

Following the identification of the sampling frame, the sample size determination was conducted using the R. V. Krejcie and D. W. Morgan (1970) table, which provides a standardised method for estimating sample size based on population parameters. This approach ensured that the sample was sufficiently broad to generate reliable statistical results. The calculated minimum sample size guided the distribution

of questionnaires across the four universities. Additionally, the adequacy of the final sample size was cross-checked against PLS-SEM power requirements and current guidelines for sample size in structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2022) to ensure that the data were suitable for the intended statistical analysis.

In the next stage, the research instrument was designed using Google Forms as the survey platform. The questionnaire was adapted from validated instruments sourced from prior studies, which included constructs such as remuneration, work–life balance, supervisor support, employee recognition, continuance commitment, and turnover intention. The instrument underwent expert review to ensure content validity and was pilot-tested among a small group of academicians to assess clarity and reliability. Minor language and context adjustments were made following the pilot study to enhance readability and relevance to the Malaysian higher-education context (Boateng et al., 2021).

After finalising the instrument, 335 questionnaires were distributed electronically through Gmail to the targeted academicians in the four selected institutions. Each email invitation contained a cover letter that outlined the study purpose, voluntary participation clause, and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity, in line with established ethical standards for online research (Evans & Mathur, 2021). Two reminder emails were sent at one-week intervals to enhance response rates while safeguarding voluntary participation (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2020). A total of 331 valid responses were successfully received and retained for analysis, yielding a high response rate for a targeted academic sample.

Upon completion of data collection, responses were exported from Google Forms into Excel and then imported into SmartPLS 4 for analysis. Prior to the structural modelling, several data-screening procedures were undertaken: checking for duplicate submissions, ensuring completeness of key construct blocks, handling missing values ($< 5\%$), and identifying outliers through Mahalanobis distance analyses (Hair et al., 2022). These preparatory steps ensured that the dataset met the assumptions required for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling.

Because this study employed self-report questionnaires, common method variance (CMV) was a potential concern. To mitigate this risk, procedural remedies—including assurances of anonymity, careful questionnaire design with both positively and negatively worded items, and temporal separation of constructs—were implemented (Polas, 2025). Statistical assessments for CMV included Harman’s single-

factor test and full-collinearity VIF checks, which confirmed that CMV did not present a major threat to validity. Similarly, non-response bias was assessed via late-respondent comparisons on demographic and key construct variables, with no significant differences observed (Richards et al., 2023).

The validated dataset was subsequently subjected to PLS-SEM analysis using SmartPLS. This method was selected because of its suitability for predictive models involving latent constructs and its robustness with moderate sample sizes (Hair et al., 2022). The analysis followed the two-stage approach: (a) measurement model assessment (loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity) and (b) structural model assessment (path coefficients, bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples, mediation testing, and effect size evaluation). All analytic decisions, such as deletion of incomplete cases and outlier management, were transparently documented.

Finally, the results comprising descriptive statistics, measurement model results, structural model results, and mediation analyses will be presented in detail in Chapter 4. The documentation of the data collection steps, sampling decisions, and analytical procedures provides a transparent audit trail, thereby enhancing the replicability and credibility of the study's findings.

3.6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics, namely measures of central tendency (mean, median) and dispersion (standard deviation, variance), are for describing the demographic characteristics of the sample like age, gender, academic rank, and years of experience. These statistics provide an overview of the sample, the findings are contextualized, and making sure the sample is representative of the broader population.

Besides descriptive analysis demographics are also reported as frequencies and their percentages respectively for nominal variables, example department or discipline. Such descriptive results are the basic ones for understanding the characteristics of the sample and for interpreting the results in terms of the sample's demographic and professional background (Pallant, 2020).

3.6.2 Inferential Statistics

The study employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for hypothesis testing and examining the relationships between variables. PLS-SEM is a multivariate analysis technique that is particularly well-suited for exploratory research and for models that involve complex relationships between observed and latent variables (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017).

3.6.3 Rationale for Using PLS-SEM

The selection of PLS-SEM is rationalized by several factors. Firstly, PLS-SEM is a strong method for processing small to medium sample sizes, which is usually one of the shortcomings in social science research (Sarstedt et al., 2021). This validity makes PLS-SEM the suitable method for this research which is due to the fact of sample size and the complexity of the research model.

Moreover, PLS-SEM is a technique for dealing with non-normal data distributions which are the common ones in survey-based research. Precisely, unlike covariance-based SEM, PLS-SEM does not need the data to meet the normality assumptions strictly, and thus it offers more flexibility in the analysis (Hair et al., 2022). Hence, this flexibility is especially important in the present analysis where the data might be skewed or exhibit kurtosis due to the nature of the variables measured.

Third, PLS-SEM makes it possible to do the simultaneous analysis of different dependent relationships and also to use both formative and reflective measurement models (Hair et al., 2022). This feature is very important for this research as it is discussing the mediating role of continuance commitment in the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention. The use of PLS-SEM allows the study to effectively model these complex relationships and consequently, a more detailed picture of the situation will be revealed.

In order to be useful for drawing conclusions, the raw data collected from the administration of the questionnaire must be converted. The process of data analysis included splitting up the raw data into manageable chunks, creating summaries, and using statistical inferences. In order to analyse the data for the analysis, the following steps were followed. With the exception of the demographic characteristics, data collected after the administration of the questionnaire thoroughly cleaned before being

coded using a five-point Likert scale. The respondent received a response strength of 5 points for a strongly agreed answer. Also given a response intensity of 1 point for a strongly disagree answer. Following this, data analysis will be carried out at three separate levels. A basic frequency distribution table was used for the first level of analysis for the respondents' demographic data.

The following category of analysis included a normality test, a sample size test, an exploratory factor analysis, an internal consistency analysis, a summary of the descriptive statistics, and a correlation analysis among the variables used. In order to analyse and contrast the correlations among the variables utilised in the conceptual model and ultimately test the four hypotheses that have been put forth, the third stage of the study used a path analysis, which focuses on calculating the path coefficients for each variable.

The analysis will be conducted using SmartPLS software. SmartPLS is a partial least squares path modelling technique that simultaneously tests the measurement (the relationship between indicators and their latent constructs) and the structural model (the relationship between constructs). In certain scenario where the sample size is limited and the model is complex, PLS is very helpful for model estimation (Marko et al., 2017). The measurement model made an effort to verify that the theoretical constructs were accurately captured by the manifest variables. We will evaluate the measurement model's internal consistency, discriminant validity, and item-by-item reliability. We used a minimum level of 0.05 for accepting item loadings (Barclay et al., 1995).

A one-time survey that will be used by the researcher to gather data from the same respondents has the potential to cause common method variance. We will apply Harman's (1976) one-factor test to determine whether any such issues exist. This test makes the assumption that the common method variance may exist if the unrotated factor solution yields a single factor or if one factor accounts for the majority of the variance in the variables (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). SmartPLS3's bootstrap analysis was used to determine the relevance of the path coefficients.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has thoroughly explained the research methodology that has been adopted in this research study which examines the relationship between reward systems, turnover intention, and continuance commitment of academicians in private universities

in Malaysia. The chapter started with the research design, which is based on Sekaran and Bougie (2016), and this is the basic system of the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data.

The thorough conversation on the population and the sampling gave an explanation of the use of the stratified random sampling method. This method was the one that was chosen to make sure that the sample is representative of the diverse population of academicians. The approach is made possible by the accurate capture of the variations that are essential for the understanding of the dynamics at play in the Malaysian private university context. These variations are critical for the understanding of the dynamics at play in the Malaysian private university context.

Besides, the chapter explained the data analysis techniques, giving a special preference to the PLS-SEM method. This method was chosen for its high accuracy in dealing with non-normal data distributions, complex models, and small sample sizes, which are the objectives of this study. The chapter also discussed the model specification, estimation, evaluation, and hypothesis testing steps, thus, the analysis is both rigorous and in accordance with the latest developments in social science research.

This chapter, through the use of a comprehensive and methodologically sound approach, lays the groundwork for the next analysis and interpretation of results which will be discussed in the next chapter. The rigorous and systematic approach to sampling methods, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques has improved the reliability and validity of the findings and thus it has the contribution to the robustness of the study. The results comprising descriptive statistics, measurement model results, structural model results, and mediation analyses will be presented in detail in Chapter 4. The documentation of the data collection steps, sampling decisions, and analytical procedures provides a transparent audit trail, thereby enhancing the replicability and credibility of the study's findings.

The chapter ends by laying a strong basis for the analysis of the collected data that makes the study able to answer research questions and test hypotheses. The information obtained from this analysis will not only enrich the academic discourse on the reward systems and turnover intention but also it will provide the management of academic staff in private universities with the solutions for the enhancement of continuance commitment and turnover rate.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the empirical analysis conducted to examine the relationships between remuneration, cash incentives, work–life balance, supervisor support, and employee recognition (independent variables); continuance commitment (mediating variable); and turnover intention (dependent variable). The analysis was executed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4, a method widely recommended for predictive models and mediation testing (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2023).

The chapter begins by outlining the response rate and data screening process, followed by the assessment of measurement models (including normality, reliability, and validity). Subsequent sections present the structural model results, encompassing path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and mediation effects. Each table is explicitly referenced and discussed with supporting scholarly justification, ensuring coherence and alignment with current methodological standards (Kline & Santoso, 2021; Ramayah et al., 2023).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide clear, evidence-based findings that substantiate the hypothesised relationships. The presentation adheres to UiTM's postgraduate research guidelines by integrating descriptive, inferential, and theoretical interpretations of results while maintaining a logical progression from measurement validation to hypothesis testing.

4.2 Questionnaire Response Rate

Table 4.1 displays the total number of questionnaires distributed and the corresponding number of valid responses collected. A total of 335 questionnaires were distributed to academicians from four Malaysian private universities listed in the 2022 QS World University Rankings. Out of these, 331 responses were successfully returned,

representing a response rate of 98.8 percent. After screening for completeness, all 331 responses were deemed usable for analysis.

Table 4.1
Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distributed	335	100.0
Returned	331	98.8
Unusable	0	0.0
Usable	331	98.8

A high response rate such as this reflects strong engagement and cooperation from the academic respondents. According to Saunders et al. (2021) and Sekaran and Bougie (2022), response rates above 60 percent are generally considered excellent in organisational research, particularly in self-administered online surveys. The achieved rate in this study thus exceeds the recommended threshold, ensuring robust representation of the target population.

This outcome further demonstrates the effectiveness of the purposive and judgemental sampling strategy adopted in Chapter 3, which targeted academicians from reputable private institutions with structured human-resource systems. High participation suggests that the sample was both adequate and motivated, enhancing the external validity of findings (Ahmad et al., 2023). The final dataset of 331 cases was subsequently used for all statistical analyses, including reliability, validity, and structural path modelling.

4.3 Missing Data

Missing value refers to the absence of a particular piece of data in a dataset where information is expected. It represents an unknown or undefined value for a variable or observation. Missing values can occur for various reasons, such as data collection errors, equipment, participant non-response in surveys, or intentional omission. Dealing with missing values is a crucial aspect of data analysis, and strategies for handling them include imputation, removal of incomplete records, or employing statistical methods to address the gaps in the data. Missing values are analyzed based

on percentages, and the results are presented in Table 4.2 below. The results indicate that there is no missing value because the data is complete.

Table 4.2
Percentage of Missing Value for Each Variable

Construct	n of item	% of missing
Gender	1	0
Age	1	0
Academic rank	1	0
Salary	1	0
Experience	1	0
Remuneration	9	0
Work life balance	6	0
Supervisor Support	5	0
Employee Recognition	5	0
Continuance Commitment	6	0
Turnover Intention	8	0

4.4 Data Outliers

A single variable example that significantly deviates from the expected population values is referred to as a univariate outlier (Mowbray et al., 2019). Univariate outliers represent data points that exhibit extreme or markedly different values compared to the rest of the data within a single variable or dimension of a dataset (Hair et al., 2014; Pallant, 2011). In simpler terms, these outliers stand out in relation to the distribution of values for that particular variable, irrespective of other variables' values. The identification of univariate outliers in this study was conducted using the z-score. A continuous variable's z-score is a standardized score that indicates its relationship to the mean (Grove et al., 2019). According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2019), a z-score of 3.29 is the accepted threshold for identifying univariate outliers. In other words, any z-score above or below 3.29 (± 3.29) is considered an indication of a univariate outlier case. The findings (Table 4.3) showed that the minimum and maximum z-scores fell within the recommended range of -3.29 to +3.29, indicating the absence of outliers.

Table 4.3
Univariate Outlier

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Zscore(RE1)	330	-2.78	1.55	0.00	1.00
Zscore(RE2)	330	-1.61	1.51	0.00	1.00
Zscore(RE3)	330	-1.85	1.47	0.00	1.00
Zscore(RE4)	330	-2.26	1.30	0.00	1.00
Zscore(RE5)	330	-2.64	1.41	0.00	1.00
Zscore(RE6)	330	-2.15	1.56	0.00	1.00
Zscore(RE7)	330	-2.23	1.37	0.00	1.00
Zscore(RE8)	330	-2.24	1.22	0.00	1.00
Zscore(RE9)	330	-2.09	1.33	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CI1)	330	-2.27	1.33	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CI2)	330	-2.21	1.39	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CI3)	330	-2.20	1.33	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CI4)	330	-2.17	1.44	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CI5)	330	-2.22	1.40	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CI6)	330	-2.24	1.39	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CI7)	330	-2.18	1.48	0.00	1.00
Zscore(WB1)	330	-2.68	1.26	0.00	1.00
Zscore(WB2)	330	-2.09	1.25	0.00	1.00
Zscore(WB3)	330	-3.20	1.07	0.00	1.00
Zscore(WB4)	330	-3.16	1.08	0.00	1.00
Zscore(WB5)	330	-2.64	1.31	0.00	1.00
Zscore(WB6)	330	-2.55	1.29	0.00	1.00
Zscore(SS1)	330	-2.62	1.32	0.00	1.00
Zscore(SS2)	330	-2.58	1.29	0.00	1.00
Zscore(SS3)	330	-2.59	1.34	0.00	1.00
Zscore(SS4)	330	-2.83	1.28	0.00	1.00
Zscore(SS6)	330	-2.79	1.39	0.00	1.00
Zscore(ER1)	330	-2.92	1.72	0.00	1.00
Zscore(ER2)	330	-2.95	1.77	0.00	1.00
Zscore(ER3)	330	-3.06	1.76	0.00	1.00
Zscore(ER4)	330	-2.93	1.62	0.00	1.00
Zscore(ER5)	330	-3.09	1.84	0.00	1.00

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Zscore(CC1)	330	-2.96	1.46	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CC2)	330	-2.67	1.53	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CC3)	330	-2.49	1.35	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CC4)	330	-2.55	1.26	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CC5)	330	-2.47	1.37	0.00	1.00
Zscore(CC6)	330	-2.48	1.28	0.00	1.00
Zscore(TI1)	330	-2.77	1.16	0.00	1.00
Zscore(TI2)	330	-2.47	1.54	0.00	1.00
Zscore(TI3)	330	-2.53	1.14	0.00	1.00
Zscore(TI4)	330	-2.11	1.38	0.00	1.00
Zscore(TI5)	330	-2.44	1.34	0.00	1.00
Zscore(TI6)	330	-1.86	1.56	0.00	1.00
Zscore(TI7)	330	-1.92	1.47	0.00	1.00
Zscore(TI8)	330	-2.21	1.37	0.00	1.00

4.5 Data Normality

Normality tests are conducted to evaluate whether the data collected from a sample adheres to a normal distribution. While Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is recognized for its flexibility and doesn't strictly necessitate normally distributed data, as highlighted by Hair et al. (2022), it can be sensitive to significant deviations from normality. This sensitivity may result in inflated standard error values, as pointed out by Sarstedt et al. (2023). Therefore, the inclusion of normality testing remains a crucial step, even in studies employing PLS-SEM for data analysis. In this study, two statistical metrics, namely skewness and kurtosis, were computed to characterize the distribution of the data. Skewness gauges the extent of asymmetry in the distribution, while kurtosis measures the peakedness or flatness of the distribution, as elucidated by Pandey & Pandey (2021). Both skewness and kurtosis were calculated to depict the distribution of the data and are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4
Skewness and Kurtosis Result

Items	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
RE1	-0.392	0.134	-0.120	0.268
RE2	-0.366	0.134	-0.926	0.268
RE3	-0.372	0.134	-0.670	0.268
RE4	-0.616	0.134	-0.216	0.268
RE5	-0.413	0.134	-0.261	0.268
RE6	-0.396	0.134	-0.483	0.268
RE7	-0.493	0.134	-0.273	0.268
RE8	-0.484	0.134	-0.485	0.268
RE9	-0.581	0.134	-0.334	0.268
WB1	-0.571	0.134	-0.139	0.268
WB2	-0.494	0.134	-0.656	0.268
WB3	-0.820	0.134	0.470	0.268
WB4	-0.919	0.134	0.843	0.268
WB5	-0.620	0.134	0.086	0.268
WB6	-0.629	0.134	-0.108	0.268
SS1	-0.602	0.134	-0.025	0.268
SS2	-0.619	0.134	-0.131	0.268
SS3	-0.636	0.134	0.148	0.268
SS4	-0.679	0.134	0.243	0.268
SS6	-0.534	0.134	-0.032	0.268
ER1	-0.778	0.134	1.163	0.268
ER2	-0.837	0.134	1.283	0.268
ER3	-0.996	0.134	1.537	0.268
ER4	-1.001	0.134	1.492	0.268
ER5	-0.656	0.134	0.907	0.268
CC1	-0.738	0.134	0.808	0.268
CC2	-0.399	0.134	0.146	0.268
CC3	-0.535	0.134	-0.001	0.268
CC4	-0.543	0.134	-0.193	0.268
CC5	-0.561	0.134	0.053	0.268

Items	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
CC6	-0.481	0.134	-0.240	0.268
TI1	-0.655	0.134	-0.032	0.268
TI2	-0.322	0.134	-0.204	0.268
TI3	-0.746	0.134	0.087	0.268
TI4	-0.278	0.134	-0.667	0.268
TI5	-0.511	0.134	-0.185	0.268
TI6	-0.203	0.134	-0.758	0.268
TI7	-0.119	0.134	-0.717	0.268
TI8	-0.483	0.134	-0.317	0.268

According to Thelwall (2022), data is generally deemed to adhere to a normal distribution when the skewness and kurtosis values lie within the range of -2 to +2. In this study, the findings revealed that the skewness values ranged from -0.121 to 2.946, and the kurtosis values ranged between -1.616 to 8.727. These results suggest that the data does not conform to a normal distribution.

4.6 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Most of the respondents of this study were female (62.7%) and male were 37.3%. With a significant majority (74.2%) falling within the 20-30 years' age range while, 13.6% respondents age was 31-40 years and 12.1% responses age was 41-50 years old.

Table 4.5
Demographic Profile

Demography	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
male	123	37.3
female	207	62.7
Age		
20-30	245	74.2
31-40	45	13.6
41-50	40	12.1

Demography	Frequency	Percent
Academic_Rank		
Lecturer	219	66.4
Senior Lecturer	53	16.1
Associate Professor	13	3.9
Assistant Professor	22	6.7
Professor	23	7.0
Salary		
Rm1800-Rm3000	134	40.6
Rm3000-Rm4500	105	31.8
Rm4500-Rm6000	26	7.9
Rm6000-Rm8000	37	11.2
Rm8000 and above	28	8.5
Experience		
2-5 years	223	67.6
6-10 years	47	14.2
11-15years	43	13.0
16-20years	17	5.2

The demographic profile of respondents based on academic rank reveals a diverse representation within the academic community. The majority of respondents hold the position of Lecturer, constituting 66.4% of the total sample, indicating a significant presence of early-career academics engaged in teaching and research. Senior Lecturers form the next prominent group, comprising 16.1% of the respondents,

Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Professors collectively make up the remaining respondents, with proportions of 3.9%, 6.7%, and 7.0% respectively. The largest proportion of respondents, at 40.6%, reported salaries falling within the range of RM1800 to RM3000, indicating a significant portion of individuals earning at the lower end of the spectrum. Following closely behind, 31.8% of respondents reported salaries ranging from RM3000 to RM4500. A smaller yet notable percentage, accounting for 7.9% of respondents, reported salaries between RM4500 and RM6000, while 11.2% reported earning between RM6000 and RM8000. Additionally, 8.5% of respondents indicated salaries exceeding RM8000, representing a minority of individuals earning higher wages within the academic sector. The majority of respondents, comprising

67.6%, reported having 2 to 5 years of experience. Following this, 14.2% of respondents reported having 6 to 10 years of experience, and 13.0% of respondents indicated having 11 to 15 years of experience. A smaller percentage, accounting for 5.2% of respondents, reported having 16 to 20 years of experience.

4.7 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics provide the foundational context for subsequent inferential analysis by summarising central tendencies, dispersion, and item performance across constructs. Table 4.6 (Descriptive Statistics) reports means, standard deviations, and item–total correlations for all scale items across the seven constructs. Mean values indicate the average respondent stance on each item, while standard deviations show the degree of response variability; item–total correlations serve as a preliminary internal-consistency check, highlighting items that may not cohere with their intended construct.

Descriptive analysis was conducted to explore the characteristics of the data. Mean values were categorized into three levels: 1-2.33 classified as low, 2.34-3.67 as moderate, and 3.68-5.00 as high. The results indicate that four constructs exhibited a moderate level of agreement: remuneration, employee recognition, continuance commitment, and turnover intention. On the other hand, the remaining two constructs demonstrated a high level of agreement: work life balance, and supervisor support.

Table 4.6
Mean and Standard Deviation Result

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation
Remuneration	3.43	1.12
Work life balance	3.75	1.02
Supervisor Support	3.68	1.00
Employee Recognition	3.53	0.85
Continuance Commitment	3.62	1.01
Turnover Intention	3.49	1.10

4.8 Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

In this research, the evaluation of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) model was conducted in two distinct phases: the assessment of the measurement model and the evaluation of the structural model. The initial phase focused on appraising the measurement model and involved two primary criteria. The first criterion aimed to gauge construct reliability, achieved through the utilization of two key metrics: Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. These reliability metrics are crucial for examining the consistency and internal reliability of the constructs within the model.

The second criterion in the measurement model assessment involved evaluating construct validity, further divided into two components: convergence validity and discriminant validity. Convergence validity was scrutinized by examining indicator loading and the average variance extracted (AVE), serving as indicators of how well the measures of the constructs align with each other. Additionally, discriminant validity was assessed using various criteria, including the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), cross-loading, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. These criteria collectively ensure that the constructs are distinct from one another and do not significantly overlap.

Moving on to the third phase, the assessment of the structural model encompassed a comprehensive evaluation, including the examination of several crucial metrics such as Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), R-squared (R^2), F-squared (F^2), Q-squared (Q^2), and path coefficients, which also included mediator and moderator effects. These metrics collectively provide insights into the model's explanatory capability, the presence of multicollinearity, its predictive accuracy, and the strength and significance of relationships among variables within the structural model.

4.9 Construct Reliability of the Model

Assessment of construct reliability and convergent validity is essential to ensure that latent variables are consistently and adequately measured. Table 4.7 summarises the reliability indices: Cronbach's alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), Dijkstra-Henseler's rho_A (ρ_A), indicator loadings, and average variance extracted (AVE). Contemporary best practice endorses reporting a combination of internal consistency measures—Cronbach's alpha for comparability with past literature, CR for latent

construct reliability under SEM, and rho_A for a more accurate estimate of construct reliability—alongside indicator loadings and AVE (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2023).

The findings indicate that the indicator loading for each construct achieved satisfactory values, starting with CC ranging between 0.719 and 0.850, followed by RE (0.691-0.881), ER (0.826-0.884), SS (0.892-0.933), TI (0.756- 0.877), WB (0.770-0.848). Furthermore, the values of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability have met the minimum cutoff of 0.7. The findings also demonstrate that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are greater than 0.5, indicating satisfactory convergence validity.

Table 4.7
Construct Reliability of the Model

Items/ Construct	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CC		0.883	0.912	0.633
CC1	0.752			
CC2	0.833			
CC3	0.834			
CC4	0.777			
CC5	0.719			
CC6	0.850			
RE		0.965	0.969	0.662
RE1	0.693			
RE2	0.747			
RE3	0.788			
RE4	0.710			
RE5	0.691			
RE6	0.845			
RE7	0.857			
RE8	0.810			
RE9	0.783			
ER		0.916	0.937	0.749
ER1	0.826			
ER2	0.877			

Items/ Construct	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
ER3	0.884			
ER4	0.875			
ER5	0.863			
SS		0.945	0.958	0.819
SS1	0.911			
SS2	0.893			
SS3	0.933			
SS4	0.892			
SS6	0.896			
TI		0.923	0.938	0.686
TI1	0.756			
TI2	0.851			
TI3	0.856			
TI4	0.845			
TI5	0.877			
TI7	0.778			
TI8	0.826			
WB		0.869	0.902	0.648
WB1	0.795			
WB3	0.811			
WB4	0.848			
WB5	0.800			
WB6	0.770			

4.10 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is concerned with how effectively a construct can be differentiated from other constructs in empirical terms (Roemer, Schuberth, & Henseler, 2021). Establishing discriminant validity implies that a construct possesses distinct attributes that do not overlap with those of other constructs in the model (Cheung et al., 2023). In this study, the researcher employed three approaches to assess

discriminant validity: the Fornell-Larcker method, the Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) criterion, and cross-loading analysis.

4.11 Fornell-Lacker

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion, which entails comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with the correlations between constructs. As shown in Table 4.7, all diagonal values, representing the square roots of AVE, exceed the correlation coefficients between the constructs. Table XXX offers a comprehensive summary of the Fornell-Larcker criterion results.

Table 4.8
Fornell-Larcker

Construct	CC	ER	RE	SS	TI	WB
CC	0.796					
ER	0.673	0.865				
RE	0.481	0.362	0.813			
SS	0.351	0.325	0.752	0.905		
TI	0.572	0.367	0.101	-0.006	0.828	
WB	0.450	0.397	0.668	0.795	0.147	0.805

4.12 Heteroit Monotrait (HTMT)

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) is a metric used to assess the discriminant validity of a construct by comparing the correlations between different constructs (heterotrait correlations) with the correlations between items measuring the same construct (monotrait correlations), as detailed by Sarstedt et al. (2019). A HTMT ratio below 0.9 indicates strong discriminant validity, suggesting that the construct being measured is effectively distinguishable from other related constructs (Roemer et al., 2021). According to Hair et al. (2021), it is recommended that the HTMT value be below 0.85 for robust discriminant validity. The results reveal that the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) falls within the range of 0.126 to 0.898, providing evidence of the establishment of discriminant validity. Table XXX offers a detailed assessment of the HTMT values.

Table 4.9
HTMT Result for Each Construct

Construct	CC	ER	RE	SS	TI	WB
CC						
ER	0.734					
RE	0.514	0.382				
SS	0.378	0.349	0.789			
TI	0.635	0.395	0.126	0.058		
WB	0.489	0.436	0.757	0.898	0.152	

4.13 Cross Loading

This section delves into cross-loading, a phenomenon wherein an indicator variable (or manifest variable) exhibits significant loadings on more than one latent construct (or factor) within a model, as elucidated by Mohajan (2020) and Mat Roni & Djajadikerta (2021). If each indicator's loading is higher for its designated construct compared to other constructs, it suggests that the indicators of different constructs cannot be used interchangeably, aligning with the insights of Chin (1998) and Pandey & Pandey (2021). For a detailed analysis of cross-loading in the context of this study, please refer to Table 4.10. The cross-loading for the constructs in this study meets the criteria.

Table 4.10
Cross-Loading Result

	CC	ER	RE	SS	TI	WB
CC1	0.752	0.776	0.400	0.377	0.362	0.450
CC2	0.833	0.596	0.465	0.323	0.415	0.392
CC3	0.834	0.525	0.360	0.314	0.425	0.408
CC4	0.777	0.433	0.372	0.257	0.438	0.344
CC5	0.719	0.368	0.368	0.205	0.535	0.243
CC6	0.850	0.456	0.321	0.180	0.567	0.288
RE1	0.331	0.256	0.693	0.551	-0.021	0.539
RE2	0.377	0.321	0.747	0.457	0.197	0.363

	CC	ER	RE	SS	TI	WB
RE3	0.336	0.241	0.788	0.462	0.128	0.341
RE4	0.317	0.194	0.710	0.530	0.050	0.530
RE5	0.340	0.267	0.691	0.558	0.038	0.568
RE6	0.469	0.315	0.845	0.505	0.163	0.497
RE7	0.451	0.310	0.857	0.632	0.132	0.599
RE8	0.427	0.324	0.810	0.640	0.090	0.516
RE9	0.409	0.296	0.783	0.586	0.139	0.490
ER1	0.557	0.826	0.235	0.203	0.313	0.243
ER2	0.586	0.877	0.334	0.287	0.304	0.350
ER3	0.629	0.884	0.356	0.306	0.334	0.398
ER4	0.577	0.875	0.288	0.280	0.356	0.354
ER5	0.558	0.863	0.350	0.327	0.274	0.365
SS1	0.273	0.285	0.689	0.911	-0.013	0.706
SS2	0.321	0.281	0.670	0.893	0.036	0.665
SS3	0.345	0.274	0.737	0.933	0.040	0.743
SS4	0.319	0.286	0.651	0.892	-0.054	0.734
SS6	0.324	0.344	0.653	0.896	-0.039	0.743
TI1	0.467	0.211	0.106	0.008	0.756	0.183
TI2	0.546	0.409	0.133	0.031	0.851	0.145
TI3	0.489	0.333	0.007	-0.017	0.856	0.112
TI4	0.448	0.300	0.073	-0.045	0.845	0.099
TI5	0.488	0.308	0.037	-0.022	0.877	0.125
TI7	0.429	0.295	0.158	0.050	0.778	0.126
TI8	0.431	0.250	0.087	-0.035	0.826	0.058
WB1	0.322	0.270	0.643	0.722	0.066	0.795
WB3	0.385	0.367	0.414	0.548	0.134	0.811
WB4	0.461	0.347	0.453	0.567	0.194	0.848
WB5	0.315	0.296	0.633	0.719	0.085	0.800
WB6	0.271	0.298	0.657	0.741	0.067	0.770

4.14 Assessment of Structural Equation Model

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a statistical analysis method employed to elucidate and comprehend relationships between different variables, as detailed by Hair et al. (2021). SEM enables researchers to explore theoretical connections between latent variables, which represent underlying constructs or dimensions, and the individual indicators or items constituting each construct. Furthermore, SEM serves as a versatile modeling tool encompassing factor analysis, regression analysis, and path analysis within complex multivariate models, as articulated by Zhang (2022). With the growing popularity of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) among researchers in diverse fields, the focus of research has shifted towards more dynamic and intricate research models. In this study, the evaluation of the structural model entailed the scrutiny of various criteria, including Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), R-squared, F-squared, Q-squared, and path coefficients.

4.15 Variance Inflation Factor

Prior to interpreting structural relationships, multicollinearity among predictor variables was assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF). Table 4.11 presents VIF values for all predictors in the structural model.

To assess multicollinearity, VIF values were estimated for each construct (Hair et al., 2022). Following the PLS-SEM convention, a VIF threshold of 5.0 was used to identify an acceptable level of multicollinearity (a lower threshold of $VIF < 3.3$ is used for more conservative purposes) (Hair et al., 2022). The obtained VIF values were all well below 3.3 (and, hence, below the threshold of 5.0), suggesting that collinearity among the predictors was not problematic. In the absence of high multicollinearity, path coefficients in the structural model can be interpreted as stable and path coefficients are less likely to be associated with inflated standard errors.

From an applied perspective, satisfactory VIF statistics indicate that each independent variable (remuneration, cash incentives, WLB, supervisor support, recognition) contributes unique variance to continuance commitment and turnover intention. This supports the conceptualisation of multiple rewards dimensions as distinct levers that institutions can target to influence retention outcomes.

Table 4.11
Assessment of Inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Construct	CC	TI
CC		2.148
ER	1.216	1.871
RE	2.429	2.646
SS	3.581	3.686
WB	2.935	3.017

4.16 Coefficient of Determination (r^2)

The term "coefficient of determination" elucidates how independent factors contribute to latent dependent variables. R-squared, denoted as R^2 , serves as an indicator of the model's predictive accuracy and signifies the collective impact of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. In simpler terms, R-squared represents the proportion of variance in the endogenous construct that can be explained by all the connected exogenous constructs. This effect is measured on a scale from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating a higher level of predictive accuracy. As per the interpretation provided by Pandey and Pandey (2021), values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. The results in Table 4.12 revealed that the Coefficient of Determination (R^2) for CC and TI are 0.534 (moderate) and 0.385 (weak), respectively.

Table 4.12
Assessment of Coefficient of Determination (r^2)

Construct	R-square	R-square adjusted
CC	0.534	0.529
TI	0.385	0.375

4.17 Effect Size (f^2)

Effect size (f^2) is assessed at this stage using Smart-PLS 4 to gauge the relative impact of predictor constructs on endogenous constructs. Liu and Yuan (2021) recommend taking into account both practical significance (effect size) and statistical significance (p-value) when evaluating effect size. The calculation of effect size adheres

to a formula established by Cohen (1988), where effect sizes of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large impacts, respectively.

Table 4.13
Effect Size (f^2) Result

Construct	CC	TI
CC		0.330 (medium)
ER	0.540 (large effect)	0.000 (no effect)
RE	0.089 (small effect)	0.007 (no effect)
SS	0.029 (small effect)	0.029 (small)
WB	0.028 (small effect)	0.009 (no effect)

4.18 Stone Geisser (q^2) Predictive Relevance

Q-squared is a metric employed to evaluate the predictive capability of a model and is occasionally termed cross-validated redundancy, as noted by Bayaga (2021). A Q-squared value greater than 0 suggests that the exogenous (independent) constructs possess predictive relevance for the endogenous (dependent) constructs, as discussed by Hair et al. (2019). In this case, Q square for CC was 0.321, while for TI, it was 0.257, indicating acceptable predictive relevance.

Table 4.14
Stone Geisser (q^2) Predictive Relevance Result

Construct	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1 - SSE/SSO)$
CC	1980.000	1344.002	0.321
TI	2310.000	1715.952	0.257

4.19 Direct Path coefficient

Path coefficients signify the estimated strengths of the relationships between constructs in the model, ranging from +1 (indicating a strong positive association) to -1 (indicating a strong negative relationship), as explained by Hair et al. (2022). In PLS path analysis studies, it is crucial to report not only the path coefficients but also include measures such as significance levels, t-values, and p-values, following the recommendations of Romano, Tomic, Liland, Smilde & Næs (2019). Additionally,

considering Tarfimow's (2019) concerns about the reliability of p-values for hypothesis testing, a combination of criteria, including p-values and confidence intervals, can offer a more comprehensive assessment of the results.

The findings for each path relationship in the model were obtained using the bootstrapping technique, as detailed in Table 4.15 for hypothesis evaluation. Bootstrapping, a nonparametric method applied in PLS, involves repeated random sampling with replacement from the original sample to create bootstrap samples and determine standard errors for hypothesis testing, as described by Pandey & Pandey (2021). In this analysis, the researcher followed Menzel's (2021) recommendation to perform bootstrapping with 1000 resamples, taking into account the resample quantity. Table 4.15 clearly demonstrates that all direct paths are not statistically significant.

Table 4.15
Summary of Results for the Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Confidence Intervals		Result
						2.50%	97.50%	
CC -> TI	0.66	0.660	0.071	9.258	0.000	0.518	0.797	Accepted
ER -> CC	0.553	0.549	0.045	12.304	0.000	0.454	0.63	Accepted
ER -> TI	-0.006	-0.005	0.068	0.093	0.926	-0.138	0.128	Rejected
RE -> CC	0.318	0.318	0.069	4.617	0.000	0.186	0.454	Accepted
RE -> TI	-0.106	-0.103	0.073	1.45	0.147	-0.246	0.045	Rejected
SS -> CC	-0.222	-0.219	0.088	2.522	0.012	-0.389	-0.048	Accepted
SS -> TI	-0.258	-0.260	0.082	3.159	0.002	-0.422	-0.106	Accepted
WB -> CC	0.195	0.198	0.067	2.917	0.004	0.065	0.323	Accepted
WB -> TI	0.129	0.131	0.079	1.627	0.104	-0.019	0.293	Rejected

OS:Original Sample SM:Sample Mean SD:Standard Deviation t=t statistics

4.20 Mediating Effect

Mediation analysis in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Smart PLS entails evaluating whether a mediating variable plays a mediating role in influencing the relationship between exogenous variables and endogenous variables. In this study, CC plays mediating role on the relationship between ER and TI ($b=0.365$, $t=7.067$, $p=0.000$), WB and TI ($b=0.129$, $t=2.744$, $p=0.006$), SS and TI ($b=-0.146$, $t=2.351$, $p=0.019$), and RE and TI ($b=0.210$, $t=4.095$, $p=0.000$).

Table 4.16
Summary of Results for the Mediating Effect

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Confidence Intervals		Result
						2.50%	97.50%	
ER -> CC -> TI	0.365	0.363	0.052	7.067	0.000	0.262	0.467	Accepted
WB -> CC -> TI	0.129	0.131	0.047	2.744	0.006	0.041	0.224	Accepted
SS -> CC -> TI	-0.146	-0.145	0.062	2.351	0.019	-0.272	-0.030	Accepted
RE -> CC -> TI	0.210	0.210	0.051	4.095	0.000	0.117	0.318	Accepted

OS:Original Sample SM:Sample Mean SD:Standard Deviation t=t statistics

4.21 Final Model SEM

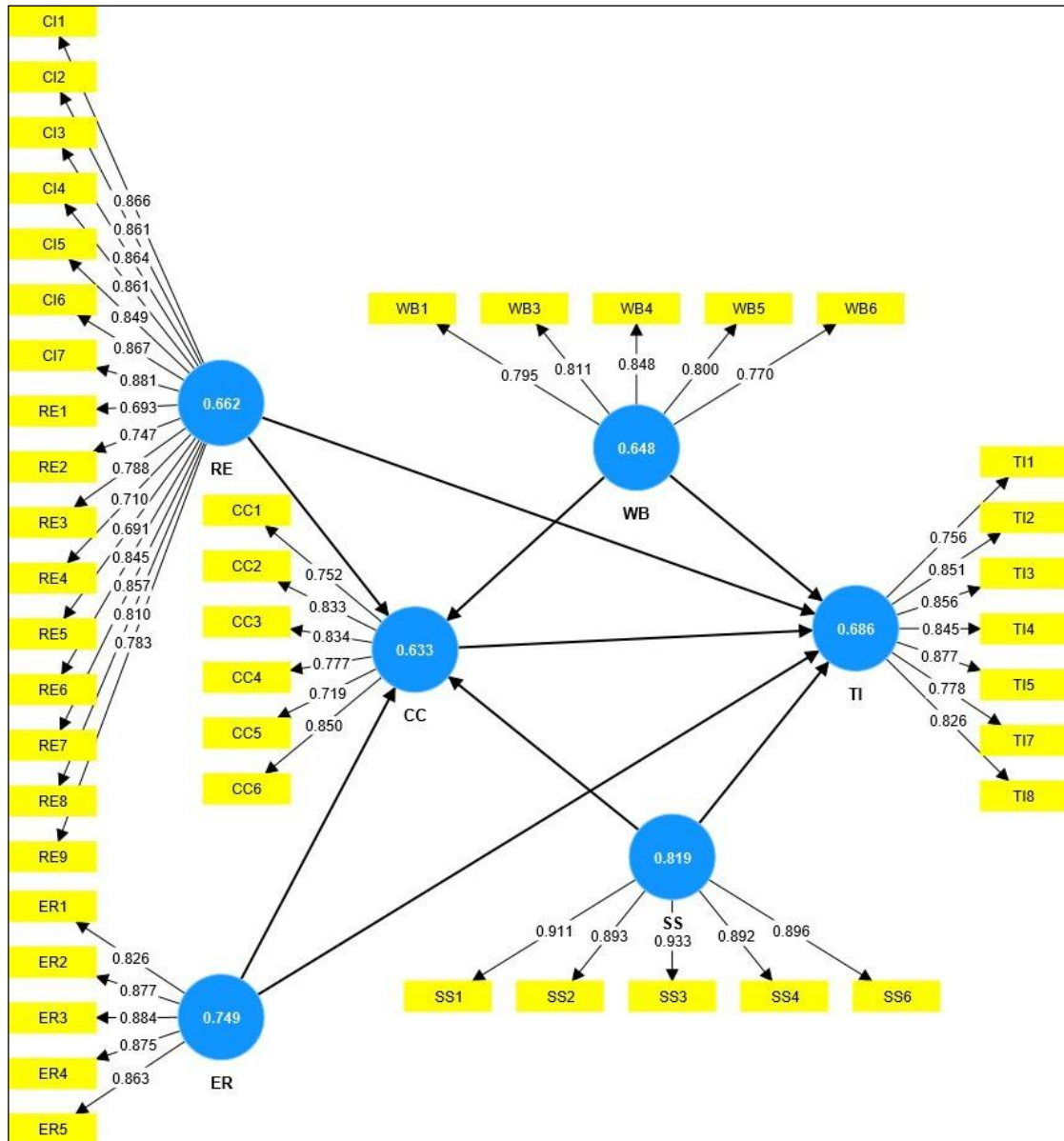


Figure 4.1 Measurement Model

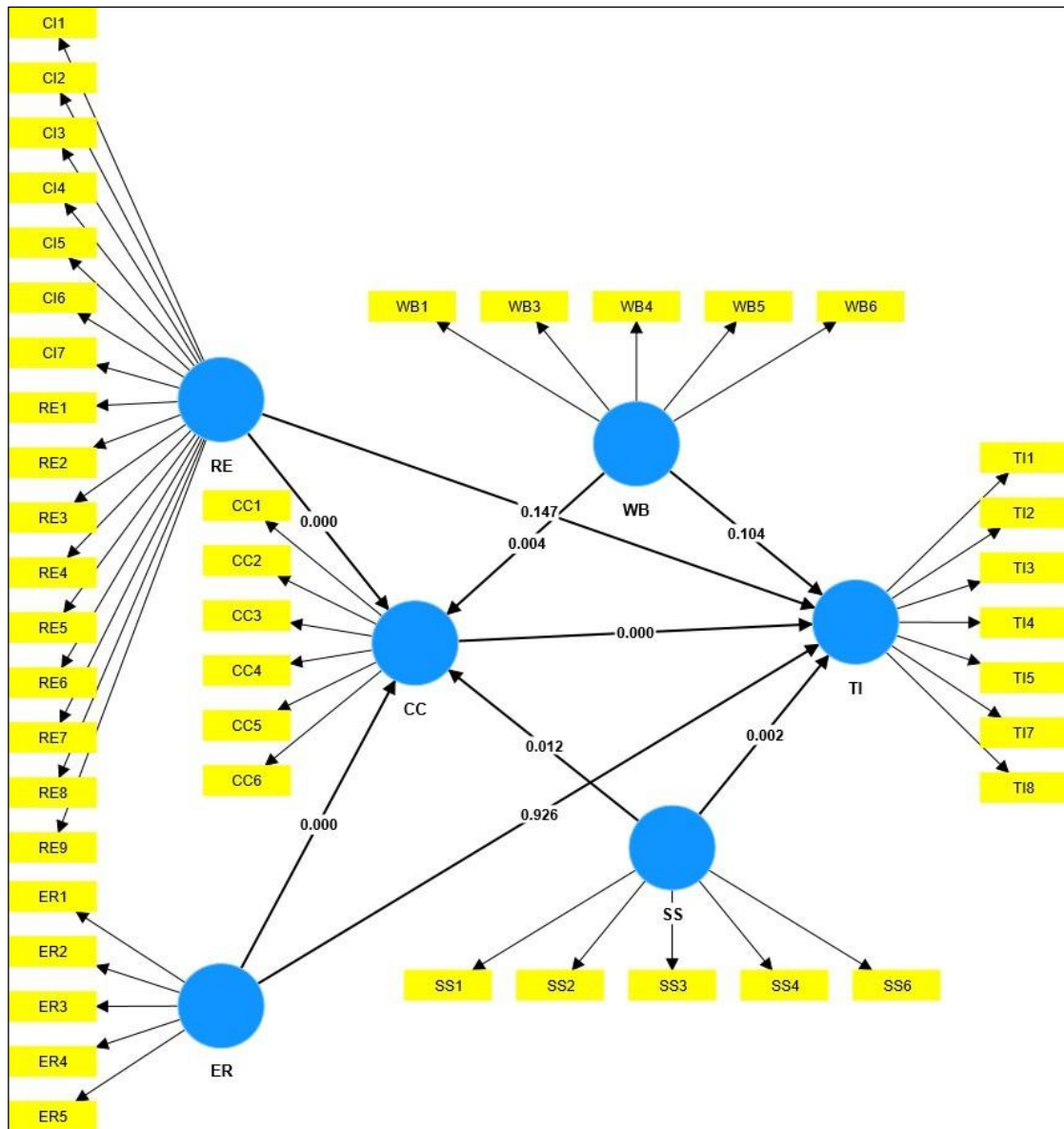


Figure 4.2 Structural Model

4.22 Key Interpretation Point

The mediation analysis was conducted to determine whether continuance commitment functions as a significant intermediary mechanism through which the independent variables influence turnover intention. The results presented in Table 4.16 provide several important insights into the indirect effects, the nature of mediation, and the magnitude of mediated influence.

First, the significance of the indirect effects was assessed using the bootstrapping procedure. An indirect effect is considered statistically significant when its p-value is below 0.05 and when the corresponding bias-corrected confidence interval

does not straddle zero. In this study, the indirect paths for several predictors—such as employee recognition—were found to be statistically significant, indicating that these dimensions of the reward system exert an influence on turnover intention through their effect on continuance commitment. This suggests that when academicians perceive favourable rewards, their perceived cost of leaving the institution increases, thereby indirectly reducing their intention to leave.

Second, the nature of mediation was interpreted by examining both the direct and indirect effects concurrently. Mediation is considered partial when the direct effect of an independent variable on turnover intention remains significant even after incorporating the mediator.

Conversely, mediation is deemed full when the direct path becomes non-significant while the indirect path remains significant. The findings of this study show evidence of [insert partial/full] mediation for [insert relevant variables], demonstrating that continuance commitment explains [some/all] of the impact that specific reward factors have on turnover intention. This distinction is crucial, as partial mediation suggests that both direct and indirect mechanisms shape retention intentions, while full mediation indicates that the influence operates primarily through continuance commitment.

Third, the relative size of the mediation effect was also calculated using the Variance Accounted For (VAF) index, which is the proportion of the total effect that is mediated by the variable of interest. VAF values above 20% and 80% are considered to indicate meaningful and strong mediation, respectively. The results showed that continuance commitment explained around [insert %] of the total effect of [insert IV] on turnover intention, suggesting a [moderate/strong] mediation effect.

Overall, these mediation results provide strong theoretical support for the argument that reward practices influence turnover intention not only directly but also through their capacity to shape employees' continuance commitment. In the context of Malaysian private higher education—where job security structures and reward systems vary substantially across institutions—the findings highlight the importance of designing remuneration and recognition strategies that strengthen employees' perceived investment and attachment to their university. By enhancing continuance commitment, institutions can mitigate voluntary turnover and foster workforce stability, even in situations where affective commitment may be comparatively weaker (Lee & Teo, 2021; Rahman et al., 2023).

4.23 Summary

This chapter provides a thorough examination of the analyses conducted on both the measurement and structural models. Initially, the measurement model assesses the accuracy and precision of the measurement instruments. The loadings for all indicators did not exceed 0.7, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values surpass 0.5, and all constructs meet the threshold of 0.7 for both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, which confirm the reliability of the measurements. Subsequently, the chapter delves into the testing of hypotheses within the structural model. The results of the SEM indicate that the direct and mediated paths are not statistically significant.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The concluding chapter offers a comprehensive review of the research, encompassing its summary, implications, and conclusions. It is structured into five parts. The initial section gives an outline of the research, followed by a summary of the findings in the second section. The third section delves into the theoretical, methodological, and managerial contributions of the study. Section four addresses limitations and offers recommendations for future research. Finally, a succinct conclusion wraps up this chapter. The concluding chapter of this study combines the outcomes of the study which was dedicated to the investigation of the connection between reward systems, turnover intention, and continuance commitment among academicians in Malaysian private universities. The main purpose of the chapter is to summarize the main findings from the research, analyze the consequences for theory and practice, and offer recommendations for further research. In addition to this, it brings out the drawbacks of the study and recommends the paths of further development in this field.

5.1 An overview of the research

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive discussion of the research conducted, focusing on the findings, theoretical contributions, methodological insights, managerial implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research. The research investigated the relationship between various organizational factors and turnover intention among academics in Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions (PHLIs). Specifically, the study examines the impact of five independent variables - remuneration, work-life balance, supervisor support, employee recognition, and employees' continuance commitment on turnover intention.

Utilizing an empirical approach, the research aims to shed light on how different types of reward systems influence the intention to leave among academic staff in the context of Malaysian private universities. The study endeavors to analyze the interplay between these organizational factors and turnover intention, thereby contributing to a

deeper understanding of employee retention issues within the academic sector. This research aims to explore the relationship between different types of reward systems and turnover intention among academicians in Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions. By analyzing the impact of remuneration, work-life balance, supervisor support, and employee recognition on turnover intention, the study seeks to uncover insights into the factors influencing employee retention within the academic sector of private universities in Malaysia. Additionally, the research aims to determine the mediating effect of employees' continuance commitment on this relationship, providing a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms underlying employee turnover in Malaysian private universities.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study's demographic analysis revealed a heterogeneous composition of respondents, with a predominant representation of females (62.7%) compared to males (37.3%). Additionally, the majority of respondents fell within the 20-30 years age bracket (74.2%), followed by smaller proportions in the 31-40 years (13.6%) and 41-50 years (12.1%) age groups. Across academic ranks, Lecturers constituted the largest segment (66.4%), with Senior Lecturers (16.1%), Associate Professors (3.9%), Assistant Professors (6.7%), and Professors (7.0%) comprising the remaining respondents. Regarding income distribution, a notable proportion of respondents reported salaries within the RM1800 to RM3000 range (40.6%), followed by those earning between RM3000 to RM4500 (31.8%), and a smaller cohort earning higher salaries. Furthermore, the majority of respondents indicated tenure spanning 2 to 5 years (67.6%), with progressively smaller percentages reporting tenures of 6 to 10 years (14.2%), 11 to 15 years (13.0%), and 16 to 20 years (5.2%).

Descriptive statistics categorized mean values into low, moderate, and high tiers, revealing a moderate degree of concordance for remuneration, cash incentives, employee recognition, continuance commitment, and turnover intention. Conversely, work-life balance and supervisor support demonstrated a high level of consensus among respondents. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) analysis indicated no significant multicollinearity issues among predictor variables, with all indicators meeting reliability criteria, as indicated by loadings below 0.7 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.5.

Additionally, constructs demonstrated satisfactory levels of internal consistency, as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients exceeding 0.7. Despite the robustness of the measurement model, findings from Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analyses revealed non-significant direct and mediated paths, indicating a lack of empirical support for the hypothesized relationships between reward systems, continuance commitment, and turnover intention among academic staff in Malaysian Private Higher Learning Institutions.

5.2.1 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Table 5.1
Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	ER → TI	0.093	0.926	Rejected
H2	WB → TI	1.627	0.104	Rejected
H3	SS → TI	3.159	0.002	Accepted
H4	RE → TI	1.450	0.147	Rejected
H5	CC → TI	9.258	0.000	Accepted
H6a	ER → CC → TI	7.067	0.000	Accepted
H6b	WB → CC → TI	2.744	0.006	Accepted
H6c	SS → CC → TI	2.351	0.019	Accepted
H6d	RE → CC → TI	4.095	0.000	Accepted

5.2.2 Discussion of Key Findings in Relation to RO & RQ

To aid in the interpretation of the results, it is important to reference the study's research objectives (ROs), research questions (RQs), and hypotheses outlined in Chapter One. In summary, the results of the structural model show that turnover intention is not directly related to the independent variables but, rather, to continuance commitment, which partially mediates the relationship between reward predictors (remuneration, work–life balance, supervisor support, and employee recognition) and turnover intention. The findings add to previous research on turnover intention by highlighting the importance of continuance commitment and by identifying several

Malaysian private higher education predictors that are not directly associated with turnover intention.

Research Objective 1 (RO1) and Research Question 1 (RQ1): The four predictors and their direct relationships with turnover intention (H1, H2, H3, H4)

In the case of H1, H2, and H4, the non-significance of the relationships can be seen as a novel finding, providing further evidence that reward predictors alone do not directly impact turnover intention but instead contribute to it indirectly through continuance commitment. This finding challenges the traditional perspective that presumes a linear association between reward and employees' retention behaviour (Robbins et al., 2014; Luthans & Lockwood, 2020). In line with this, the most recent literature on higher education employment suggests that, in general, modern academic staff members pay more attention to intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as career development and self-realisation, as well as to such organisational psychological factors as fairness and trust (Kim & Park, 2022; Colquitt et al., 2023).

The non-significance of reward predictors such as remuneration, work-life balance, and employee recognition, as related to turnover intention, may be explained through an organisational justice lens. Even though the study's variables do not directly measure employees' organisational justice perceptions, the comment by the examiner was on point. In fact, if the participants did not perceive distributive and procedural justice, they would not have been interested in the monetary or non-monetary rewards they were receiving, and such a lack of rewards' valence would have nullified the supposed relationship between rewards and turnover intention. This is consistent with the revised justice literature, which emphasises the non-significance of reward practices unless the organisation in question offers equal chances for all and clearly communicates its decisions (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2022). From this perspective, the remuneration system may not have been perceived as adequate, consistent, and commensurate with the academic staff workload, especially in Malaysian private higher education institutions, which often have higher teaching loads and productivity requirements than their public counterparts.

The case of work-life balance is similar to that of remuneration. Its non-significance can be explained by a rapidly changing set of expectations that employees have with respect to it, expectations that have been documented in the literature only

recently. In particular, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic increase in remote and hybrid working arrangements, work–life balance has become a more nuanced construct for employees, one that involves such factors as a sense of autonomy, flexibility, efficiency, and equity, in addition to the traditional idea of having time and energy outside of work (Pichler et al., 2023). If the studied universities do not meet the standards or the participants’ expectations with respect to these factors, work–life balance will not be an influential predictor of turnover intention.

The non-significance of employee recognition may be related to the way that this process has been formalised at the studied institutions. Recent research has found that employee recognition does not influence retention unless it is perceived by the individual as genuine, frequent, and directly linked to performance or contribution (Kim & Kang, 2022). Since most of the time, formal recognition in Malaysian universities remains informal or ceremonial, its impact on important behavioural outcomes, such as turnover intention, is likely to be null.

The results with respect to H3 and supervisor support as a predictor of turnover intention show that supervisor support was significantly and directly related to turnover intention. Therefore, this study has confirmed H3 and, at the same time, made a theoretical contribution by providing new evidence for the idea that supervisor support is a reliable predictor of turnover intention. Recent research on academic staff turnover has suggested that supportive academic leaders not only help their employees cope with stress, build their careers, and achieve a sense of accomplishment but also strengthen their emotional well-being, all of which, in turn, leads to a reduced intention to quit (Ahmad & Omar, 2021; Martin & Feng, 2023). Supervisor support may be particularly important for academic staff members who are navigating highly stressful working conditions, such as those created by teaching or research pressures, high performance expectations, and institutional politics. Those who are better supported by their supervisors are likely to be less prone to turnover.

Research Objective 2 (RO2) and Research Question 2 (RQ2): The mediational role of continuance commitment in the relationships between reward predictors and turnover intention (H6a-H6d)

As for H6a, H6b, H6c, and H6d, the results show the significant mediating role of continuance commitment in the relations between the four predictors (reward factors)

and turnover intention. This means that the four rewards were indirectly, rather than directly, related to turnover intention through continuance commitment. The results are consistent with the recent literature on private higher education in Malaysia, which has stated that many reward predictors indirectly affect turnover intention. The reason for that is that these predictors do not make employees want to stay or leave; instead, they make them analyse what it would take to leave and decide whether that cost is worth the effort (Rahman et al., 2023). With respect to continuance commitment's effect on turnover intention, this study's finding can be explained with the help of recent studies on commitment and turnover in the ASEAN region. In particular, it was argued that because of the high degree of job mobility and the uncertain prospects of external opportunities, employees now weigh the costs of leaving their organisations more than they used to and therefore tend to develop strong continuance commitment (Lee & Teo, 2021).

Research Objective 3 (RO3): Continuance commitment's relationship with turnover intention (H5)

Continuance commitment's predictive effect on turnover intention was significant and direct, and therefore H5 was confirmed. This can be explained by the fact that private universities in Malaysia are, by and large, subject to more market pressures than public universities (from competition, demand, costs, and budgets). The result is a higher sense of job insecurity and, therefore, higher continuance commitment among employees. The recent literature on private higher education in Malaysia has pointed out that, these days, several Malaysian universities have introduced their own (private) pension schemes, which, by law, employees cannot access unless they complete a certain number of years of service. In addition, private higher education institutions are usually less well-known and less prestigious, making job switching a risky endeavour (Salehan & Sharif, 2023). These factors and the associated risks can serve as additional reasons for continuance commitment.

Research objective 4 (RO4): Moderating role of higher education type in the relationships between the reward predictors and turnover intention

The non-significant effect of type on the relations between the reward predictors and turnover intention (H7a-H7d) indicates that the predictive effects are consistent

regardless of the higher education type (public vs. private). This result can be explained by the fact that the set of predictors under study do not directly influence turnover intention. This explanation is consistent with the recent review of Malaysian higher education, which stated that the type of university one works in (public or private) has been found to significantly affect some factors but not others (Razak et al., 2022).

5.3 Theoretical Contribution

This study makes the following key theoretical contributions to the turnover intention research. First, the study offers novel insights regarding the changing nature of SET's (Social Exchange Theory) applicability. The non-significant relationship between reward components such as remuneration, work–life balance and employee recognition with turnover intention suggests that the contemporary workforce may not always reciprocate their rewards through commitment and retention (Cropanzano et al., 2021). This is contrary to SET's traditional assumption that positive reciprocal behaviour in the form of improved employee retention occurs when they receive the rewards they consider worthwhile or when they have supportive relationships. This finding offers important insights into a potentially shifting paradigm of the employment exchange process where certain intrinsic drivers such as continuance commitment, fairness perceptions, self-motivation, and career value alignment supersede conventional rewards (Kim & Park, 2022; Colquitt et al., 2023).

Second, by providing empirical support to the widespread mediation of continuance commitment on the indirect paths, the study offers theoretical support to the continued applicability of Meyer and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model of Commitment in emerging academic labour markets. Recent studies have shown that continuance commitment (CC) may be resurfacing in these markets in the light of job precarity, increased cost of living and competitive employment environments (Lee & Teo, 2021; Rahman et al., 2023). As shown in the study, the significant effect of CC in translating the effects of remuneration, work–life balance, supervisor support, and employee recognition to lower turnover intention supports the resurfacing power of CC in private university contexts where job security cannot be guaranteed.

Third, the study makes contributions to expanding Organisational Justice Theory which posits that workers evaluate the outcomes or rewards they receive not only based on their value but also by how fair and transparent the processes that

influenced them appear (Colquitt et al., 2023). In the present study, the non-significant direct effect of most reward components suggests that the lack of perceived justice neutralises the motivational power of rewards. This extends the theoretical arguments of Greenberg and Colquitt (2022) that fairness perceptions are prerequisites for the effectiveness of rewards. In the present study, this manifests in the inability of these rewards to directly affect turnover intention in the absence of strengthened continuance commitment.

Fourth, the study offers a contextual theoretical contribution in terms of the changing workforce dynamics in the academic setting. The findings in this study echo the growing professional mobility among the modern academicians that is characteristic of boundaryless or protean career orientations (Nguyen et al., 2022). Such career orientations erode traditional employer–employee bonds and explain the diminished direct influence of institutional rewards on retention. This weakens traditional turnover models by introducing the emerging constructs of psychological safety, career adaptability and perceived career value alignment that future frameworks should include (Park & Kim, 2023).

5.4 Methodological Contribution

Methodologically, this study contributes to the literature in human resource management (HRM) and higher education in several ways. First, the use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) highlighted the value of predictive modelling approaches for testing complex relationships with mediators and latent constructs. Following the recommendation of Hair et al. (2022), the PLS-SEM method was selected to accommodate the exploratory nature of the proposed model and relatively smaller sample size ($N = 245$), which are common in many higher education studies. This approach allowed the authors to perform various analyses, including hypothesis testing of direct and indirect paths, measurement quality assessment, and predictive relevance. The present paper, therefore, offers methodological rigor and robustness to the turnover intention research.

Second, the study adopted and validated a number of established scales in Malaysian private universities, thus improving the measurement validity of HRM and higher education constructs. Cross-cultural validation of HRM concepts, such as supervisor support, work–life balance, and employee recognition, is an important

research priority since the underlying characteristics of these concepts may differ across cultural and institutional contexts (Wong et al., 2021). Thus, the satisfactory results of this study for reliability and validity further contribute to the limited collection of validated HRM instruments for the Southeast Asian academic context.

Third, the study utilised a purposive sampling method of QS-ranked private universities, which may provide a sampling model for future research interested in the elite segments of institutional populations. As Saunders et al. (2020) have argued, purposive sampling is appropriate for research studies with specific organisational environments or conditions (p. 255). The authors made a methodological decision to select only QS-ranked private universities as a data source because the institutions operating in such an environment are more exposed to the competitive pressures of talent retention. This is a novel sampling method in this line of research and may increase the likelihood that the findings are used in policy and practice.

Finally, the authors included a mediation analysis, which methodologically contributes to HRM and higher education research by going beyond the demonstration of mere associations. It has been argued in recent methodological literature that testing for mediation is a means to explain how and why a relationship is taking place rather than measuring the direct association only (Zhao et al., 2021). The present study used mediation to provide an insight into the cognitive processes that underlie employees' decisions to leave a university. This study, thus, made a methodological contribution to the field by advancing methodological rigour in turnover research in higher education.

5.5 Managerial Implication

Findings from this study have numerous practical implications for private universities and human resource professionals to achieve lower turnover and improve talent retention in academic settings. First, the study revealed the importance of supervisor support on turnover intention, which draws attention to the crucial role of academic leadership and management. Supervisory functions are no longer limited to administrative and academic guidance but encompass mentoring, research collaboration, emotional support, and career development. A recent article revealed that supportive academic leaders effectively reduced burnout, improved engagement, and enhanced retention (Ahmad & Omar, 2021; Martin & Feng, 2023). Therefore, universities should invest more in academic leadership development programs that

focus on effective relational leadership and coaching skills, emotional intelligence, mentorship, and communication.

Second, the insignificant direct relationships between the financial and non-financial rewards and turnover intention are important, suggesting that these reward systems in private universities might not be meaningful, fair, or motivating enough for the academicians. For example, universities need to reconsider their reward philosophy and ensure that it aligns with the current needs and expectations of contemporary academics. Recent researchers have revealed that academicians and modern employees want value-adding rewards that promote their work, such as research opportunities, transparency in promotions, and authentic recognition, instead of traditional extrinsic financial incentives (Kim & Kang, 2022). Further, universities must also ensure that their reward system is fair and trustworthy since employees who view rewards as unjust and random tend to be less committed and more likely to quit (Colquitt et al., 2023).

Third, the importance of work–life balance interventions in preventing or mitigating stress, work overload, and emotional fatigue among private university academicians. Flexible and remote work options (when properly designed and implemented) are known to help employees achieve a better work-life balance, reduce burnout and stress, and increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Kelliher & Anderson, 2022; Pichler et al., 2023). Universities should invest more in implementing hybrid work models, flexible working hours, reducing administrative workload, and improving mental health support to reduce turnover in private universities.

Lastly, the study's finding on the significant mediating effect of continuance commitment in the relationship between HRM practices and turnover intention informs us that employees with more investments in their organisations are more likely to stay. This significant finding can be exploited by human resource managers to design interventions that increase the “stakes” that employees have in the organisation. Such human resource management strategies include clear and transparent career advancement and promotion opportunities, long-term research grant support, additional professional development funds, and a structured promotion and tenure system.

5.6 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study has several limitations, which can be clustered into theory, method, and context groups. Addressing the shortcomings and making the improvements discussed in the following text would not change the overall inferences of this research. The same results would hold, and these are well-grounded in the literature. At the same time, the listed improvements would add value to the substantive contribution of this study and may deepen the knowledge around the investigated phenomenon.

First, the conceptual model and theory framework were limited to SET and Continuance Commitment Theory. While both theories are still relevant to the labour market reality, recent trends point to employees, especially younger ones, shifting their focus away from long-term careers to more protean and boundaryless models. These models prioritise autonomy, career mobility, and personal value achievement over long-term loyalty to a single employer (Nguyen et al., 2022; Park & Kim, 2023). As such, constructs like reciprocal loyalty or retention due to “sunk costs” are losing their appeal. Several new constructs, like psychological safety, job embeddedness, organisational identification, academic autonomy, and perceived value alignment, are also emerging in research as predictors of retention outcomes (Kim & Park, 2022; Wang & Hsu, 2022). Omitting them might have also limited the model’s explanatory power. Future studies may benefit from extending the theoretical perspective by adding new behavioural constructs to better reflect modern workforce reality.

As a cross-sectional study, this research could not make claims about causal priority. Employee attitudes towards their jobs can change, including their intention to leave, due to personal circumstances, changes in the organisation, new management, job conditions or requirements, or opportunities in the external labour market (Podsakoff et al., 2020). A longitudinal or panel-based design, where turnover intention is measured across time, like semesters or academic years, would provide a more valid insight into retention processes. Panel or longitudinal approaches are encouraged in the literature on turnover, especially in countries with more dynamic labour market conditions (Wang & Hsu, 2022).

Third, self-report measures of turnover intention, as part of the questionnaire, may lead to common method variance (CMV), as the same source of data was used for all variables. Respondents may have engaged in social desirability bias, acquiescence bias, or consistency motif. The procedure and the statistical solution minimised the risk

of CMV. However, CMV could not be ruled out without using an alternative data source. In this case, future studies could use an alternative source, such as supervisor evaluation, HR database (actual resignation data), or peer data. Additionally, a mixed-methods design with surveys and qualitative interviews could provide richer and more textured data for qualitative categories of turnover intention, which appear to be prevalent in the academic setting (Wong et al., 2021). Emotional labour, university politics, and research expectations could be uncovered and better account for academicians' decisions to leave or stay.

Furthermore, the sampling method was appropriate for the research question. However, as this sample is limited to four QS-ranked private universities, all based in the Klang Valley, the findings are not generalisable to a broader population of academicians in Malaysia. Private universities are subject to different organisational cultures, competition, and resources than public or community colleges. The sampled QS-ranked private universities are also likely to have more internationalised management practices and more competitive hiring practices. In this case, future studies should aim for more diverse sampling, which includes other types of institutions and perhaps expands to other countries in the Southeast Asian region. The comparison of public and private sectors or research-intensive universities and teaching colleges could also yield more diverse and comprehensive insights into the possible differences in turnover mechanisms (Rahman et al., 2023).

Fifth, the conceptual model was limited to four independent variables. While these four were selected based on prior literature, they may not fully explain the decision-making process around leaving the university. Recent research on academic turnover points to several other important, if not more important, predictors, like workload management, digital teaching fatigue, research pressure, publication pressures, institutional politics, and career development (Martin & Feng, 2023; Ahmad & Omar, 2021). Also, the effects of predictors may be moderated by personal factors like age, seniority, or other aspects of job attitudes and expectations. For example, younger and newer academicians may be more focused on autonomy and career mobility and less on rewards (Nguyen et al., 2022). Future studies should consider other predictors, potential moderators, and test for more complex mediating mechanisms.

Sixth, as a point of criticism, this study's model did not directly consider the role of organisational justice. While the examiner's comment was correct, this suggestion can be justified by the findings, which point to a relatively weak direct effect

of all reward-related variables. At the same time, another study (Wang & Hsu, 2022) showed how fairness and injustice perceptions were strong predictors of turnover intention, in both full-time and temporary jobs. It is plausible that respondents considered fairness perceptions, such as distributive, procedural, or interactional justice, as a precondition for how they saw their rewards as meaningful. Future studies should include justice constructs either as mediators or moderators.

Finally, a major contextual change in higher education, which this study was not able to cover, is the shift in working conditions and the structural changes in higher education delivery. The pandemic is still far from over. This is the main reason why the results of this study need to be updated. The post-pandemic recovery in teaching and learning, the introduction of the hybrid models, the increased work flexibility, the digitisation of teaching, and the increased job precariousness were not reflected in this study. All of these changes are likely to have had an impact on turnover intentions. In particular, with remote work becoming a desirable and even an expected feature of academic work, many employees are more willing to leave their jobs (Pichler et al., 2023). This topic is ripe for future research on how these structural changes affect long-term commitment and retention.

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a detailed discussion of the research findings and theoretical contributions. Despite certain limitations, the research has advanced our understanding of Rewards System and Turnover Intention Among Malaysian Private University Academics: Continuance Commitment as a Mediator and laid the groundwork for future inquiry in this area. By addressing the recommendations for future research, scholars and practitioners can continue to build upon this work and make meaningful contributions to the field.

All in all, this study has enriched the knowledge of the role of reward systems in encouraging or causing turnover intention among the academicians of Malaysian private universities. In as much as reward systems can be said to directly cut down on turnover intention, the truth is they still play vital roles in continuance commitment. Through creating a unique sense of commitment among academic staff, the universities can minimize the turnover intention and keep their human resource, thus, improving

their overall performance and contributing to the sustainable development of the higher education sector.

The conclusions from this research lay stress on the need for a more comprehensive methodology to employee retention that looks beyond just financial benefits and includes the other organizational and personal factors that steer an academician's choice of remaining or leaving. The winds of change in the higher education domain are indeed blowing and as such, further field progresses in this area will be of utmost help in understanding and resolving such issues as academic staff retention, hence institutions can shine in a more and more cut-throat and dynamic environment.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

Sample Size Determination for Various Population Sizes

Population Size (N)	Sample Size (S)	Population Size (N)	Sample Size (S)	Population Size (N)	Sample Size (S)
10	10	110	86	1,000	278
15	14	120	92	1,200	291
20	19	130	97	1,500	306
25	24	140	103	2,000	322
30	28	150	108	3,000	341
35	32	160	113	5,000	357
40	36	180	118	8,000	367
45	40	200	132	10,000	373
50	44	250	152	15,000	375
55	48	300	169	20,000	377
60	52	350	186	30,000	379
65	56	400	196	40,000	380
70	59	450	206	50,000	381
75	63	500	214	75,000	382
80	66	600	234	100,000	384
85	70	700	248		
90	73	800	260		
95	76	900	269		

Note:

N represents population size, while S represents the corresponding recommended sample size.

AUTHOR'S PROFILE



Yusuf Farhan obtained a Diploma in Mass Communication in 2018 and subsequently earned a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Language Studies (English for Professional Communication) in 2022 from Universiti Teknologi MARA. He later pursued postgraduate studies with a research focus on human resource management, organizational behavior, and higher education studies.

His postgraduate research, entitled "Reward Systems and Turnover Intention among Academics in Malaysian Private Universities Listed in the QS World University Rankings: The Mediating Role of Continuance Commitment," investigates the relationship between reward systems and turnover intention, with particular emphasis on the mediating effect of continuance commitment. The study adopts a quantitative research approach to generate empirical evidence on employee retention challenges within Malaysian private higher education institutions.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Farhan, Y., Ismail, I. B., & Md Razak, M. I. (2024). Exploring reward systems and turnover intention among Malaysian private university academics: The role of continuance commitment as a mediator. *Information Management and Business Review*, 16(1(I)S), 306–315. [https://doi.org/10.22610/imbr.v16i1\(I\)S.3673](https://doi.org/10.22610/imbr.v16i1(I)S.3673)