



## An Analytical Research on the Impact of Employee Poaching on Turnover Intention Among Private University

Marisi Butarbutar<sup>1\*</sup>, Elly Romy<sup>2</sup>, Ramesh Krishnan<sup>3</sup>, Acai Sudirman<sup>4</sup>

1. Master of Management Study Program, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Sultan Agung, Indonesia

2. Department of Management, Faculty of Economics, Universitas Prima Indonesia, Indonesia

3. Department of Management, Faculty Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

4. Department of Management, Faculty of Economics, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Sultan Agung, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author e-mail: [marisibutarbutar@stiesultanagung.ac.id](mailto:marisibutarbutar@stiesultanagung.ac.id)

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – This research analyzed the relationship model between employee poaching, career development, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and turnover intention in private university lecturers in North Sumatra.

**Methodology** – Data was collected through an online survey using a structured questionnaire sent to lecturers working at various regional private universities. The number of samples explored was 200 lecturers. Following the process, path analysis methods using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were used to test the proposed relationship model.

**Results** – The results showed that employee poaching, work-life balance, and job satisfaction had a positive and significant effect on turnover intention. Meanwhile, other research results found that career development had a positive and not significant effect on turnover intention.

**Originality** – The results provided valuable perception for private higher education management in understanding the factors that influenced turnover intention of lecturers and developing effective strategies to retain as well as increase satisfaction and retention of lecturers. The results of this analysis also contributed to human resource management research and literature, specifically in the context of higher education in Indonesia. By paying attention to these factors, higher education institutions can maintain and increase retention of lecturers and improve the general quality of higher education in the North Sumatra region.

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## 1. Introduction

Private universities in North Sumatra, Indonesia, are institutions that play an essential role in providing higher education to the community. However, retaining quality lecturers is crucial in achieving high and relevant educational standards (Nawaz & Pangil, 2016; Amin, 2022). Employee poaching has become an increasingly disturbing problem in the stability of the teaching workforce, where other universities actively recruit lecturers from other institutions (Kim, 2014; Sheldon & Li, 2013). This phenomenon disrupts the continuity of teaching and research at the

source institutions and can damage academic as well as financial credibility (Moen & Rosén, 2004). Amid the complex challenges faced by lecturers in private universities, turnover intention remains an issue that needs deeper investigation (Gyensare et al., 2015). Factors such as employee poaching experiences, job satisfaction, and work-life balance significantly influence the turnover intention of lecturers to leave personal position. Nationally in Indonesia, previous research showed that private universities faced significant challenges in retaining academic staff. Factors such as a lack of transparency in reward systems, excessive administrative burdens, and insecure contract status are major drivers of turnover among private lecturers. Retention is also connected to competitive remuneration and supportive welfare policies, including health benefits as well as performance rewards. However, the relationship between these factors has yet to be fully shown, specifically in private universities in North Sumatra.

Employee poaching known as talent raiding or employee raiding, has become common in various industries, including the academic sector (Li et al., 2023; Efendi et al., 2021). This act refers to the active recruitment of employee from one organization by another organization, often with attractive offers such as higher salaries, better benefits, or good career opportunities (Panagiotakopoulos, 2012; Silalahi et al., 2022). The consequences of employee poaching can be significant, specifically in turnover intention among teaching staff at higher education institutions (Kumar et al., 2015). Many research investigated the impact of the act on turnover intention in various organizational settings (T. Nguyen, 2013; Risdianto et al., 2016). In an academic context, the consequences of employee poaching are significant because of the unique skills and knowledge of teaching staff (Sheldon & Li, 2013). When faculty are targets of poaching by competing institutions, this leads to increased turnover intention as the employee is attracted by the prospect of higher salaries, better career development opportunities, or a more enjoyable work environment (Kim, 2014; Saikim et al., 2016).

Research has shown that the threat of employee poaching can reduce loyalty and organizational commitment among teaching staff, contributing to increased turnover intention (Panagiotakopoulos, 2012). Faculty who feel the current institutions underappreciate employee may be more susceptible to external job offers from poaching efforts. In addition, the competitive landscape of the academic sector aggravates the impact of employee poaching on turnover intention. As universities and colleges compete for top talent to improve academic reputation and research output, such recruitment activities have intensified, further increasing turnover intention among teaching staff (Li et al., 2023; Saikim et al., 2016). Employee poaching poses a significant challenge for higher education institutions, as it can worsen turnover intention among employee. Moreover, understanding the mechanisms and consequences of the act is critical to developing effective strategies to retain top talent and strengthen organizational stability in the academic sector (Kumar et al., 2015; Kim, 2014).

The importance of career development for lecturers cannot be ignored because this impacts motivation, performance, and commitment to the institutions of employment (Indah et al., 2023; Elian et al., 2020). Consequently, a lack of clear career development opportunities leads to dissatisfaction and turnover intention (Permana et al., 2021; Dewi & Nurhayati, 2021). Career development is crucial in influencing turnover intention among teaching staff in higher education institutions (Raharjo et al., 2022). The concept of this development includes a range of activities and programs designed to help individuals plan as well as achieve career objectives (Chang et al., 2007; Nawaz & Pangil, 2016). Following the discussion, lecturers with clear opportunities for career development tend to be more attached to the institutions of employment and have lower turnover intention (Pratiwi & Lo, 2020; Sinaga et al., 2022). The importance of job improvement in reducing turnover intention of lecturers has been recognized in the human resource management

literature (Pratiwi & Lo, 2020; Chen et al., 2004). Effective career growth programs increase faculty satisfaction as well as engagement and reduce the desire to pursue opportunities in other workplaces.

Previous research proposed that limited or unclear career development increased faculty turnover intention. Uncertainty concerning available job growth opportunities or lack of support from institutions can make lecturers feel dissatisfied and look for better opportunities (Lee & Eissenstat, 2018; Lie et al., 2021). In addition, structured and focused career development helps retain lecturers who have the potential to become leaders or drivers of change at the institutions (Consiglio et al., 2016; Sofiyani et al., 2022). Lecturers who feel supported in developing a good career tend to have stronger ties to the institutions and less desire to move (Wilson et al., 2009; Hamzah et al., 2020). In the increasingly competitive and dynamic context of the higher education sector, career development is a critical factor in retaining top talent and improving the quality of teaching as well as research (Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2020; Naway & Haris, 2017). Therefore, a deep understanding of the relationship between career development and turnover intention of lecturers is essential in building an effective human resource management strategy in higher education.

Poor work-life balance can be a significant factor influencing faculty turnover intention (Syara & Syah, 2022; Novianti & Fuadiputra, 2021). This imbalance leads to stress, burnout, and lack of satisfaction in the professional and personal lives of lecturers (Kerdpitak & Jermstittiparsert, 2020; Thomas et al., 2024). Work-life balance has become an increasingly important issue in turnover intention among teaching staff in higher education (Butarbutar et al., 2022). In an academic environment that often demands high levels of time and commitment, teaching staff often need help to balance work demands and personal needs (Kakar et al., 2021). Previous research showed that work-life imbalance was an essential factor influencing turnover intention among the employee (Yu et al., 2022; Boamah et al., 2022). Lecturers who feel overburdened by work demands are expected to experience stress, burnout, and a lack of satisfaction in personal work life, leading to increased turnover intention (Grigoryan, 2024; Khalil et al., 2021). Therefore, a better understanding of the relationship between work-life balance and faculty turnover intention can provide valuable guidance for human resource management in higher education (Musthofa & Suaedi, 2024; Suganda, 2022).

Job satisfaction among lecturers is essential in maintaining the stability of the teaching staff in private universities (Irawati et al., 2024; Zhong et al., 2024). Lecturers who are satisfied with personal jobs have a higher commitment to the institutions and less desire in moving to another place (Ban & Hwei, 2024; Hofmann & Strobel, 2020). However, factors such as excessive workload, lack of recognition for contributions, and a non-conducive work environment can reduce job satisfaction (Bello et al., 2021; Sudirman et al., 2021). Previous research showed that low levels of job satisfaction were an essential factor influencing turnover intention among teaching staff (Orpina et al., 2022; X. Li et al., 2022). Lecturers dissatisfied with the jobs tend to pursue better opportunities that offer a more satisfying work environment or working conditions (Erturk, 2022; Chaturvedi, 2024). The importance of job satisfaction in reducing turnover intention of lecturers has been recognized in the human resource management literature (Romy et al., 2022; Efendi et al., 2021). Higher education institutions need to pay attention to the factors that influence job satisfaction among lecturers and create a supportive work environment to increase the retention of top talent (Sija, 2021; Sofiyani, Sembiring, et al., 2022).

Private universities in North Sumatra face increasingly fierce competition in recruiting and retaining quality lecturers, similar to many other regions in Indonesia. A major problem that arises is employee poaching, where other universities actively recruit lecturers from different institutions,

disrupting the continuity of the teaching staff and academic stability. Therefore, this research aims to fill the knowledge gap in the literature by analyzing the relationship model between employee poaching, career development, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and turnover intention among lecturers in private universities in North Sumatra. Understanding the relationship between these variables is hoped to provide valuable perception for private higher education management in developing effective strategies to maintain and increase satisfaction as well as retention of lecturers.

## 2. Research Methods

This research was conducted using a quantitative method using instruments and quantitative data analysis with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2015). The sample consisted of lecturers from various private universities in the North Sumatra region, including individuals with diverse educational backgrounds, such as master's and doctorates degrees, dedicated to higher education. Lecturers had teaching experience in various disciplines, including social sciences, humanities, science, engineering, and business.

**Table 1.** Operational Definition of Research Variables

Variables	Code	Items	References
Employee Poaching	EP1	Compensation and Benefits	(M. Li et al., 2023; Saikim et al., 2016)
	EP2	Work Environment	
	EP3	Perceived Job Security	
	EP4	Recruitment Strategies	
Career Development	CD1	Work experience	(Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2020; Naway & Haris, 2017)
	CD2	Skills Development	
	CD3	Professional Network	
Work-Life Balance	WLB1	Time Flexibility	(Yu et al., 2022; Boamah et al., 2022)
	WLB2	Balanced Workload	
	WLB3	Management and Co-employee Support	
	WLB4	Employee Program Settings	
	WLB5	Emotional Balance	
Job Satisfaction	JB1	Recognition and Awards	(Erturk, 2022; Chaturvedi, 2024)
	JB2	Organizational culture	
	JB3	Relationships with Bosses and Co-employee	
	JB4	Responsibility and Autonomy	
	JB5	Achievements and Challenges	
Turnover Intention	TI1	Organizational Support	(Kerdpitak & Jermittiparsert, 2020; Thomas et al., 2024)
	TI2	Organizational Commitment	
	TI3	Professional Development	
	TI4	Job Stress	

Source: processed data

The sample also comprised employee with varying levels of experience, ranging from new to lecturers with many years of teaching proficiency. Therefore, this collection reflected the diversity of characteristics and experiences of lecturers in the North Sumatra region, allowing the research to provide more specific as well as relevant perceptions for human resource management in private universities in the area. The online survey was sent to respondents via an online survey platform, accessed through a computer or smartphone device. The review was designed using a structured and valid questionnaire relevant to the research variables, namely employee poaching,

career development, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. A non-probability sampling method was used to determine the sample size. This was oriented towards a purposive sampling method, recording a total number of 200 lecturers in North Sumatra were used during the research. Following the process, the analysis tested the hypothesis using a variant-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) called Partial Least Square (PLS) and the SmartPLS version 3.0 application as a tool to analyze it. Measurement of exogenous and endogenous variables applied previous references that were relevant to the topic and research variables, as shown in Table 1 above.

The operational definition of this study includes five main variables measured through several indicators. Employee Poaching includes compensation and benefits, work environment, perceived job security, and recruitment strategies, which reflect the attractiveness of other institutions to lecturers (M. Li et al., 2023; Saikim et al., 2016). Career Development is measured through work experience, skills development, and professional networks that strengthen career mobility (Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2020; Naway & Haris, 2017). Work-Life Balance includes time mismatch, balanced workload, management and peer support, employee programs, and emotional balance (Yu et al., 2022; Boamah et al., 2022). Job Satisfaction is determined by recognition, organizational culture, work relationships, level of autonomy, and professional achievement (Erturk, 2022; Chaturvedi, 2024). Finally, Turnover Intention is reflected through organizational support, commitment, professional development opportunities, and work stress (Kerdpitak & Jermstiparsert, 2020; Thomas et al., 2024).

### 3. Results and Discussions

This study presents respondent characteristics for an overview of the background of those involved in the data collection process. Respondents' demographic characteristics will likely affect how they perceive working conditions, work experiences, and how they form the intention to leave or stay with the organization. The data include gender, age groups and domicile of the lecturer who participated in the study. Understanding the distribution of demographics of the participants allows the study to establish a better foundation of context in regard to the demographics of the participants and their relevance to the variables being studied. Additionally, it may help explain the representation of the sample in relation to the true conditions of lecturers at private universities in North Sumatra.

**Table 2.** Description of Research Respondents

Categories	Details	Amount	Percentages (%)
Gender	Men	88	44
	Woman	112	56
Age (Years)	25-34	44	22
	35-44	56	28
	45-54	65	32.5
	55-64	35	17.5
Domicile	Medan	74	37
	Tebing Tinggi	26	13
	Pematangsiantar	42	21
	Others	58	29

Source: processed data

The Respondent Description Table gives information about the demographics of the study participants in regards to gender, age and location of residence. There were more women than men

as they represented 56% of the total number of respondents, while men represented 44%. The greatest proportion of respondents were between 45-54 years old (32.5%), and then 35-44 years (28%) 25-34 years (22%), and finally 55-64 years (17.5%). As such, most of the respondents represent individuals who have reached their mid-career and have long histories of work experience. Additionally, the majority of the respondents resided in Medan (37%), followed by Pematang Siantar (21%), the remaining respondents lived in other areas (29%), and the least amount of respondents lived in Tebing Tinggi (13%). This breakdown of respondents by area indicates that there is diversity across different cities in North Sumatra which demonstrates that the researchers included lecturers from multiple areas in the province.

### 3.1. Outer Model Measurement

To assess the outer model, validity and reliability tests were carried out. With the requirement that the loading factor be greater than 0.7 and the AVE value be 0.5, the loading factor established a convergent validity test and AVE (Hair, 2014). According to Hair (2014), the model reliability test was determined by looking at the composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha values, which should be greater than 0.7. The measurements of the outer model were explained in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Outer Model Measurement Results

Constructs/items	Outer Loading	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Employee Poaching		0.885	0.920	0.744
EP1	0.744			
EP2	0.915			
EP3	0.871			
EP4	0.909			
Career Development		0.960	0.974	0.927
CD1	0.927			
CD2	0.980			
CD3	0.980			
Work-Life Balance		0.902	0.928	0.721
WLB1	0.845			
WLB2	0.916			
WLB3	0.823			
WLB4	0.744			
WLB5	0.908			
Job Satisfaction		0.903	0.928	0.720
JS1	0.839			
JS2	0.893			
JS3	0.849			
JS4	0.818			
JS5	0.843			
Turnover Intention		0.987	0.990	0.962
TI1	0.975			
TI2	0.968			
TI3	0.985			
TI4	0.994			

Source: processed data

Work-life balance, job satisfaction, career growth, employee poaching, and turnover intention all had loading factors with values greater than 0.7 and 0.5 for the average variance extracted (AVE) value in the validity test displayed in the table. All of the research variables had

strong reliability values, as seen by the Cronbach's alpha value and composite reliability values for each variable being greater than 0.7. These reliable numbers served as a summary of the variable's state, indicating that the relationship between the variables was in good enough condition for additional testing.

### 3.2. Inner Model Measurement

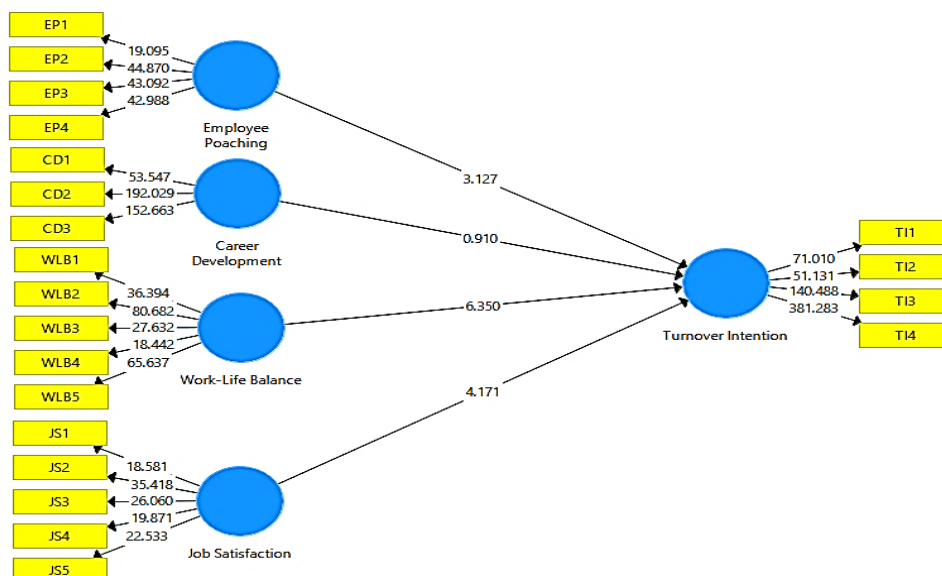
Research data was bootstrapped using SmartPLS 3.2.9 to measure the inner model. The significance of the two associated variables and the R-square of the study were the two outcomes of bootstrapping that were achieved during the analysis. The potential of exogenous variables to construct endogenous variables was demonstrated by the R-square value. R-squared values were divided into three categories (Chin et al., 2008). The association between exogenous values forming endogenous variables was minimal when the R-square value was 0.19, and moderate when it was 0.33. Additionally, the link was strong when the value was 0.67.

**Table 4.** Calculation Results of The R-Square Value

Notes	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Turnover Intention	0.412	0.400

Source: processed data

A value of 0.412 was determined by calculating the R-square value for the endogenous turnover intention variable. This indicated a moderate level of exogenous variable explanation for the turnover intention variable. In order to establish the hypothesis testing and ascertain the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables, a significance test was performed. The process-related p-value demonstrated a significant criteria. At a significance level of 5%, the exogenous variable was considered to have a substantial impact on the endogenous variable if the p-value between the two variables was less than 0.05. The exogenous variable therefore had no discernible impact on the development of endogenous variables when the value was greater than 0.05.



**Figure 1.** Hypothesis Testing Results

The hypothesis testing results image displays the structural relationships between the research variables along with the strength of Influence that each path has on turnover intention.

This image provides an empirical representation of which variables have been shown to be statistically significant through the visualization of the path coefficients derived from the bootstrapping method, thus demonstrating how the variables relate to each other. The image indicates that employee poaching, work-life balance, job satisfaction are positively related to Turnover Intention (and are statistically significant), while career development is not statistically significant. As a result, these findings confirm that external factors (such as job opportunity at other institutions, conditions of work-life balance, and lecturer's job satisfaction) influence a lecturer's desire to leave the institution, rather than career development opportunities; therefore, this image provides a visual representation of the path analysis results of this study.

**Table 5.** Hypothesis Test Results

Path Between Variables	Coefficient	t-count	P-Value	Conclusion
Employee Poaching => Turnover Intention	0.187	3,127	0.002	Accepted
Career Development => Turnover Intention	0.056	0.910	0.363	Rejected
Work-Life Balance => Turnover Intention	0.405	6,350	0,000	Accepted
Job Satisfaction => Turnover Intention	0.186	4,171	0,000	Accepted

Source: processed data

Based on the results of the path analysis, three variables were found to have a positive and significant effect on turnover, including employee poaching, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. Employee poaching variable showed 0.187 coefficient, with 3.127 calculated t-value and a p-value of 0.002, signifying that the hypothesis was accepted. This implied that as the incidence of poaching increased, the probability of lecturers developing turnover intention also rose. These results were in line with research presented by (Kim, 2014; Saikim et al., 2016). Furthermore, work-life balance had the strongest effect on turnover, with 0.405 coefficient, 6.350 calculated t-value, and a p-value of 0.000. This showed that work-life imbalance significantly drove intention to leave the institutions, according to (Yu et al., 2022; (Boamah et al., 2022). Following the discussion, job satisfaction also proved to have a significant effect on turnover, having 0.186 coefficient, 4.171 calculated t-value, and 0.000 p-value in line with (Erturk, 2022; Chaturvedi, 2024). The career development variable did not show a significant effect on turnover, with only 0.056 coefficient, 0.910 t-value, and 0.363 p-value. The outcome signified that even though career development was important, the attribute was not strong enough to influence employee turnover intention in the context of this research line with (Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2020; Naway & Haris, 2017). The result reflected the perception that career development programs were not yet incorporated with promotion or tangible job status improvement. Therefore, efforts by private higher education institutions to reduce turnover in instruction were needed.

### 3.3. Discussion

The first hypothesis test ( $H_1$ ) results showed that employee poaching positively and significantly affected turnover intention. Employee poaching, or recruiting talented individuals from other organizations, had several positive as well as significant impacts on turnover intention in a company, while also introducing fresh perspectives and ideas into the organization. When a new employee was recruited from other companies, the employee often brought innovative methods and diverse experiences that stimulated creativity and problem-solving in existing teams. This influx of new talent renewed the work environment and reduced the probability of employee feeling stagnant or undriven in personal roles, reducing intention to change jobs. As a result, intention to change jobs was reduced because employee was less expected to pursue other opportunities when being recognized and respected in the current roles. The results strengthened

as well as broadened understanding in the research of organizational behavior and human resource management, particularly concerning the dynamics of labor competition between companies. This research contributed to the development of theories on employee mobility and organizational attractiveness, while also showing the importance of external factors, including recruitment strategies of competitors, in influencing employee turnover intention. Practically, the results serve as a caution to organizations, particularly private higher education institutions, to strengthen employee retention through the implementation of effective career management, provision of competitive incentives, and improvement of supportive work environment.

The second hypothesis test ( $H_2$ ) showed that career development positively and did not significantly affect turnover intention. There were several reasons why the influence of the process on turnover intention was not often significant, even though it was essential for employee career development. Following the discussion, career development sometimes led to promotions or an increase in job status. Many job growth programs only focused on developing skills or increasing competency without guaranteeing the promotion or salary increase that employee wanted. As a result, employee might not be motivated to stay with the company just because of the existence of a career improvement program. Other factors, such as job satisfaction, work environment, and balance between work and personal life, often have a greater influence on turnover intention than career development. The results added to the literature suggesting that career development was not automatically a primary determinant of employee intention to leave an organization. This shows that while career development is perceived as an important need, employee may consider the program alongside other factors such as work-life balance, organizational culture, or compensation. The findings inspired organizations, particularly the institutions where the research was conducted, to prioritize career development incentives, and ensuring that the initiatives would be accompanied by clear promotion pathways, recognition of achievement, as well as tangible job status improvement. Without concrete outcomes from career development programs, employee might not perceive direct benefits, and intention to stay was insignificantly affected.

The third hypothesis test ( $H_3$ ) showed that work-life balance positively and significantly affected turnover intention. A balance between work and personal life allowed employee to maintain physical and mental health. By having sufficient rest, recreation, as well as time with family, employee tended to be happier and more satisfied with all aspects of life. This can reduce work-related stress and fatigue levels, reducing the probability of intention to change jobs. Relating to the outcome, work-life balance increased employee engagement and productivity. When employee felt balanced between the demands of work and personal needs, employee tended to be more focused, energetic, and passionate about tasks. The results supported and extended theories on work well-being and life satisfaction, signifying that work-life balance was a crucial factor in determining how employee stay or leave an organization. This shows that when workload is unbalanced with personal time, the risk of turnover intention increases, even when other aspects such as compensation or career development are met. The results sent a strong signal to organizations, including higher education institutions and other sectors, to develop more flexible work policies that promote a healthy work-life balance for employee. Policies such as flexible working hours, hybrid work systems, and mental health support can be effective strategies for employee retention.

The fourth hypothesis test ( $H_4$ ) showed that job satisfaction positively and significantly affected turnover intention. Employee who felt satisfied with work tended to be more engaged and committed to the company. Moreover, job satisfaction formed feelings of appreciation for individual contributions, strengthening the emotional bond between employee and the organization. As a result, employee who were satisfied with the jobs were less expected to pursue

other opportunities, reducing turnover intention in the company. Theoretically, these results reinforced concepts in job satisfaction and employee engagement theory, showing that job satisfaction played a direct role in shaping loyalty and retention intention in an organization. Job satisfaction formed a sense of appreciation for contributions made, strengthening the emotional bond between employee and the company. Practically, the results inspired organizations including the institutions where the research was conducted to prioritize job satisfaction in HR management policies. Measures such as improving internal communication, creating a supportive work environment, rewarding employee performance, and including staff in decision-making are major to building job satisfaction, which reduces turnover intention.

#### 4. Conclusions

This study demonstrates significant relationships among employee poaching, career development, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and lecturers' turnover intention at private universities in North Sumatra. The findings indicate that employee poaching, career development, work-life balance, and job satisfaction contribute to reducing turnover intention, with clear and adequate career development enhancing job satisfaction. These results highlight the importance of managing poaching risks amid increasing competition in the higher education sector. A healthy work-life balance is also associated with higher job satisfaction and lower intention to leave. Practically, university management should strengthen lecturer retention through employee engagement programs, fair reward systems, and supportive work environments. Human resource policies should integrate work-life balance initiatives, such as flexible working arrangements and mental health support. However, as the study is limited to a specific region and relies on cross-sectional data, further research across different contexts is recommended to improve generalizability and validity.

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