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Job Satisfaction Bridges Contract Violation and Turnover Intention

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Abstract

Employee retention is a critical challenge in public sector organizations, where unmet expectations and organizational misalignments can influence workforce stability. Psychological contract violations, perceived breaches of unwritten organizational promises, have been linked to decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions. However, limited empirical studies examine the mediating role of job satisfaction in this relationship within public institutions. This study aims to investigate how psychological contract violation affects turnover intention and whether job satisfaction mediates this effect. Quantitative research was conducted using a survey of 70 employees, with data analyzed through Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS. Results indicate that psychological contract violations significantly reduce job satisfaction and increase turnover intentions. Job satisfaction negatively affects turnover intentions and partially mediates the relationship between contract violation and intention to leave. These findings highlight the importance of aligning organizational promises with employee expectations. Implications suggest that public institutions should enhance communication, implement clear policies, and provide career development opportunities to strengthen employee satisfaction and retention.

Keywords

Job Satisfaction, Psychological Contract Violation, Public Sector, Turnover Intention.

1. Introduction

Turnover intention can be defined as an employee's intentional thought process or plan to leave their current job for another position elsewhere (Saufi et al., 2023). This variable is considered important because it is a strong indicator of job turnover, which directly impacts organizational sustainability (Lazzari et al., 2022). Factors influencing turnover intention include job satisfaction, emotional attachment, organizational commitment, and perceptions of fairness in employment relationships (Gulo & Ardiansyah, 2025). Artha and Nuvriasari (2025) found that workload and organizational support are significant predictors of turnover intention in Indonesia.

One determinant that is receiving increasing attention in organizational behavior research is psychological contract violation (Kanu et al., 2022). Psychological contract violation refers to the perception that an organization has breached the unspoken agreements or reciprocal expectations underlying the employment relationship (He et al., 2023). However, its impact on employees is not only direct but can also occur through internal psychological mechanisms. In contrast, job satisfaction represents how employees emotionally and cognitively assess their work experiences, including pay, workplace conditions, relationships with leaders, and prospects for professional growth (Mohamed et al., 2024). The quality of social interactions at work has an impact on job satisfaction in addition to structural considerations. Positive relationships between leaders and subordinates as well as effective interpersonal communication can increase job satisfaction of public sector employees (Putri & Fathiyah, 2025). Therefore, job satisfaction often functions as a bridge linking psychological contract violation to employees' intention to leave the organization.

These determinants are applicable across sectors, encompassing both private enterprises and public institutions that encounter diverse operational dynamics and challenges. In the Indonesian context, the phenomenon of job turnover is also evident in public sector organizations, including TVRI Yogyakarta. As a state-owned broadcaster, TVRI faces significant challenges in the era of digital transformation, both in terms of improving broadcast quality, adopting technology, and retaining loyal employees (Johannes, 2024). Several reports indicate that rigid bureaucracy, limited resources, and low employee adaptability to changing demands are often major obstacles to improving the performance of public institutions (Kristian et al., 2025). These conditions have the potential to lead to psychological contract violations when organizational promises regarding promotions, rewards, or career development are not fulfilled (Liao et al., 2024). Under these circumstances, employees often feel less satisfied with their work, show weaker organizational commitment, and become more inclined to consider leaving (Fajariyanti et al., 2022).

Empirical evidence regarding how psychological contract violation affects turnover intentions remains inconsistent. Several studies have shown a significant positive effect. For example, Azeem et al. (2020) demonstrated that when the psychological contract was violated, employees experienced job dissatisfaction, which subsequently elevated their intention to resign in Pakistan's banking sector. Furthermore, Kanu et al. (2022) indicated that psychological contract violation significantly increased turnover intention, with organizational climate moderating this relationship at a private Nigerian university. Similarly, He et al. (2023) showed increased turnover intention among knowledge-based employees in China when organizational promises were not fulfilled. More recently, Hao et al. (2023) found that psychological contracts decreased organizational commitment, ultimately increasing turnover intention among employees who remained after downsizing in retail and manufacturing companies in China. However, other studies found that psychological contract violation was not always significantly related to turnover intention, as some employees chose to stay despite disappointment (Zhao et al.,

2007). These differences in findings indicate a research gap that requires further investigation, particularly by incorporating mediating variables.

The variations found between studies highlight the need for more research on how psychological contract violations impact workers' intentions to quit, especially when job satisfaction is taken into account as a mediating factor. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between psychological contract violations and employees' intentions to quit among staff at Yogyakarta TVRI Station, with job satisfaction examined as a mediating factor. This study used a quantitative methodology, gathering data via a survey to test the proposed empirical model. In addition to providing fresh perspectives for more efficient human resource management in public institutions, the findings are anticipated to provide theoretical contributions by enhancing the scholarly literature on organizational behavior.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Psychological Contract Violation and Turnover Intention

A psychological contract violation occurs when employees perceive that the organization has not fulfilled its reciprocal commitments, such as compensation, promotions, and career development (Robinson & Morrison, 2000). It reflects an individual's belief in implicit promises between employee and organization forming the employment relationship, and when broken, creates disappointment, reduces trust, and weakens loyalty (Rousseau, 2012; Faizan et al., 2025). Such violations can trigger negative attitudes, lower organizational commitment, and increase turnover intention, defined as the tendency to leave for more suitable opportunities (Amoah et al., 2021; Saufi et al., 2023). This is critical as turnover intention predicts actual turnover and affects organizational stability and public service sustainability (Lazzari et al., 2022).

Contract violations and turnover intentions are positively correlated. Fatmawati and Hindiarto (2023) found that in the Contact Center Service Division of a major company, among Chinese knowledge workers, Turkish public sector employees, and Canadian proactive employees, violations increased the likelihood of leaving and triggered negative work behaviors. He et al. (2023) reported that knowledge workers in China who experienced psychological contract violations were more likely to consider leaving their organization. Akca (2024) demonstrated that violations of psychological contracts significantly increased turnover intentions among public sector employees in a Turkish government district. De Clercq (2025) showed that in Canada, psychological contract violation triggered turnover plans and destructive behavior, particularly among proactive employees.

H1: Psychological contract violation has a positive effect on turnover intention.

2.2. Psychological Contract Violation and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to an individual's positive attitude toward their job, reflecting the degree of congruence between expectations and perceived reality, including aspects of salary, working conditions, relationships with superiors, and career development opportunities (Puente & Nuria, 2023). Dayanti and Nurchayati (2023) showed that effective organizational support and leadership strengthen job satisfaction. High levels of job satisfaction create enthusiasm, loyalty, and a desire to remain with the organization, while low levels of job satisfaction may reduce motivation and performance (Dzikri et al., 2024). Amoah et al. (2021) found that psychological contract violations reduce job satisfaction because employees perceive unfulfilled organizational promises, leading to disappointment and perceptions of unfairness. Faizan et al. (2025) confirmed that psychological contract violations are a significant factor that weakens employee job satisfaction.

Hao et al. (2023) demonstrated that in retail and manufacturing companies in China, psychological contract violation reduced employee job satisfaction and positive attitudes toward the organization. He et al. (2023) found that among knowledge-based employees in China, psychological contract violation decreased job satisfaction by weakening organizational trust. Khoury (2025) reported that in the technology sector in the United States and Canada, psychological contract violations were significantly negatively associated with job engagement, indicating that higher perceived violations corresponded with lower employee satisfaction and engagement.

H2: Psychological contract violation has a positive effect on job satisfaction.

2.3. Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Job satisfaction reflects an employee's positive feelings toward their job, arising from the fulfillment of personal needs, expectations, and values within the work environment (Hasan et al., 2021). Satisfied employees tend to demonstrate loyalty, enthusiasm, and emotional attachment to the organization, while dissatisfied employees are more susceptible to decreased motivation and engagement (Hadj, 2024). Prabandari et al. (2025) indicate that job satisfaction is a key determinant in promoting favorable organizational results, substantially impacting employees' performance. Lubis et al. (2024) note that in the context of organizational behavior, job satisfaction is a key factor suppressing turnover intention, as satisfied employees are less likely to seek other jobs. Conversely, Gulo and Ardiansyah (2025) show that job dissatisfaction can significantly increase employees' desire to leave the organization.

Chen et al. (2023) showed that in Malaysia, job satisfaction reduced turnover intention among young workers. Lee and Kim (2024) found that among forestry workers in South Korea, harsh and unstable working conditions caused dissatisfaction, which increased turnover intention. Zhang et al. (2024) demonstrated that in China's construction industry, higher job satisfaction was linked to a reduced intention among employees to leave their organization. Soeprapto et al. (2024) found that in Indonesia, greater job satisfaction significantly reduces employees' intentions to leave their organization.

H3: Job satisfaction has a positive effect on turnover intention.

2.4. Job Satisfaction as a Mediator

As a psychological mechanism that connects psychological contract breach with turnover intention, job satisfaction is essential. When an organization fails to fulfill its promises, employees experience disappointment, which lowers job satisfaction and ultimately increases the likelihood of leaving the organization (Pyhäjärvi & Söderberg, 2024). He et al. (2023) showed that job satisfaction plays both a direct and indirect role in various work experiences. Through this mechanism, negative perceptions of the psychological contract can translate into turnover intention. In this view, job satisfaction is a psychological characteristic that links employees' perceptions of unfair treatment at work with their rational choice to seek employment elsewhere (Damara & Rahardjo, 2024). This understanding confirms that psychological contract violation not only impacts cognitive aspects but also triggers a decline in employee satisfaction and emotional attachment to the organization (Topa et al., 2022). Thus, job satisfaction can be understood as a psychological variable that links experiences of organizational injustice with employees' rational decisions to seek new opportunities.

Empirical support for this mediating role has also been demonstrated in various previous studies. He et al. (2023) found that among knowledge-based employees in China, psychological contract violation decreased job satisfaction, which in turn increased the likelihood of leaving the organization. Kurniawan et al. (2024) showed that exposure to a toxic work environment and excessive workload reduces job satisfaction, reinforcing its role in linking workplace conditions with employee productivity outcomes. Yu and Hamid (2024) demonstrated that among freelance employees in China, higher levels of psychological contract fulfillment reduced turnover intention via increased job satisfaction, with job satisfaction acting as an important mediator. Faizan et al. (2025) confirmed that job satisfaction acts as a significant mediator connecting psychological contract violation with turnover intention.

H4: Job satisfaction mediates the effect of psychological contract violation on turnover intention.

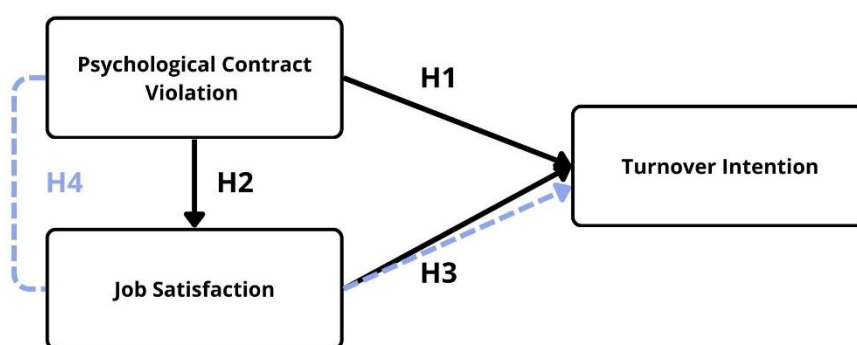


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships among the variables in the research model. Psychological contract violation is proposed to have a direct relationship with turnover intention, as stated in H1. In H2, psychological contract violation is also linked to job satisfaction. H3 describes the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, indicating that changes in job satisfaction influence employees' intention to leave. Finally, H4 shows that job satisfaction functions as a mediating variable that connects psychological contract violation with turnover intention.

3. Methods

This study used a quantitative research approach, collecting data via a survey that was given to participants directly. All 225 personnel of the Yogyakarta Special Region TVRI Station, including Civil Servants (*Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN*), contract workers, government employees with work agreements (*Pegawai Pemerintah dengan Perjanjian Kerja/PPPK*), and non-civil servant employees (*Pegawai Bukan Pegawai Negeri Sipil/PBPNS*), made up the research population. Because ASN workers are directly involved in core broadcasting and organizational administration operations, they are the main focus of this study. Additionally, this group is the most pertinent for examination in the context of psychological contract violations and job satisfaction because of their employment connections, which are governed by legal and psychological contracts. To make the data collection procedure easier, the calculated sample size of 69.24 was rounded to 69 responders using the Slovin algorithm and a 10% margin of error.

A five-point Likert measuring scale, with ratings ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), was used in a closed-ended survey to collect the data.

In May 2025, respondents received this instrument directly. Three main factors were examined in the questionnaire: employees' intention to leave, job satisfaction, and psychological contract violation. The psychological contract violation variable was measured using nine items by Robinson and Morrison (2000), job satisfaction was measured using four question items by Anderson et al. (2002), whereas turnover intention was measured with five items by Wayne et al. (1997).

Data analysis in this study was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach through SmartPLS software. This method was chosen due to its suitability for examining models with relatively small sample sizes and for analyzing complex relationships among latent variables that may not be directly observable. The analytical process involved several key stages. First, the measurement model was assessed through convergent and discriminant validity tests to ensure that the indicators accurately represent their respective constructs and are distinct from other constructs. Next, reliability tests were performed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement instruments. Finally, the structural model was examined, which included testing the overall model fit, evaluating the R-Square values to determine the explanatory power of the independent variables, and conducting hypothesis testing to examine both direct and indirect relationships. Additionally, the analysis explored the mediation effects among variables and calculated effect sizes (f^2) to assess the magnitude of relationships, providing a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics within the model.

4. Results

The idea of a psychological contract includes the implicit expectations that an employee and the business share. Breaking this agreement has been shown to reduce job satisfaction, which may eventually raise the intention to leave. According to social exchange theory, improving commitment and lowering employees' inclination to resign depend on job satisfaction. This topic is relevant to civil staff at TVRI in the Special Region of Yogyakarta because of the organizational dynamics and professional expectations in the public broadcasting sector. The results of an empirical study on the connection between psychological contract violation and turnover intention, which is partially explained by the mediating role of job satisfaction, are thus presented in this section.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Category	Description	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	42	61.4%
	Female	27	38.6%
Age	20-30 years	12	17.1%
	31-40 years	21	30.0%
	41-50 years	22	31.4%
	>50 years	15	21.4%
Latest Education	Senior High School	5	7.1%
	Diploma (D1/D2/D3/D4)	17	24.3%
	Bachelor's/Master's/Doctor's	48	68.6%

Sixty-nine civil servants from the TVRI station in Yogyakarta's Special Region participated in this study. Table 1 shows that there were 27 (38.6%) female respondents and 42 (61.4%) male respondents. The majority of responders, or 43 people (61.4%), were between the ages of 31 and 50. This suggests that the medium productive age group predominates. In addition, 48 participants (68.6%) had bachelor's to master's degrees (Bachelor–Doctor), followed by diploma holders (D1–D4) at 17 (24.3%) and high school graduates at 5 (7.1%). This composition shows

that the responders have sufficient expertise. An empirical study indicates a positive correlation between contract violations and turnover intentions.

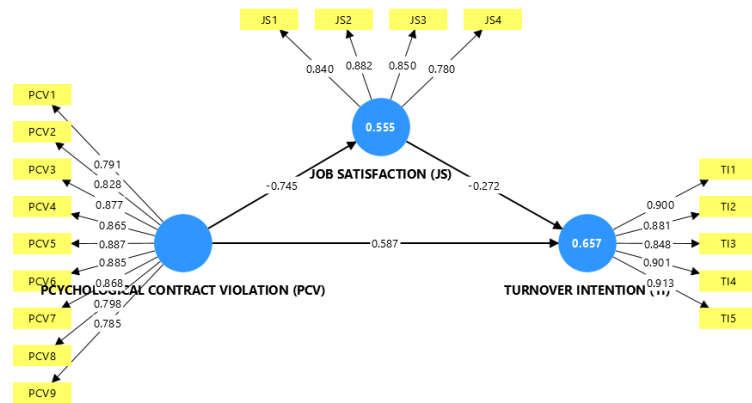


Figure 2. Structural Model Test

The relationships between the study model’s constructs are shown in Figure 2. Nine indicators with an outer loading of 0.785–0.887 measure Psychological Contract Violation (PCV), four indicators with an outside loading of 0.780–0.882 measure Job Satisfaction (JS), and five indicators with an outer loading of 0.848–0.913 measure Turnover intention (TI). As a result, every variable satisfies the convergent validity requirements. In terms of structure, PCV directly positively affects TI (0.587), JS negatively affects TI (-0.272), and PCV negatively affects JS (-0.745). The model exhibits a moderate to strong explanatory power, as indicated by the R2 values of 0.555 for JS and 0.657 for TI.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test

Variables	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach’s alpha	pa	pc	AVE
Job Satisfaction (JS)	JS1	0.840	0.860	0.879	0.905	0.704
	JS2	0.882				
	JS3	0.850				
	JS4	0.780				
Turnover Intention (TI)	TI1	0.900	0.933	0.933	0.949	0.790
	TI2	0.881				
	TI3	0.848				
	TI4	0.901				
	TI5	0.913				
Psychological Contract Violation (PCV)	PCV1	0.791	0.949	0.952	0.957	0.712
	PCV2	0.828				
	PCV3	0.877				
	PCV4	0.865				
	PCV5	0.887				
	PCV6	0.885				
	PCV7	0.868				
	PCV8	0.798				
	PCV9	0.785				

Table 2 shows that all indicators' outer loading values fell between 0.780 and 0.913. JS4 (0.780) and PCV9 (0.785) had the lowest values, but they were both still within the allowed range, thus, no markers were eliminated. The constructs' capacity to explain large indicator variance was demonstrated by all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values being more than 0.50. While Composite Reliability scores were above 0.90, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.860 to 0.949, indicating that all constructs attained an exceptional degree of internal consistency. As a result, the research tool was deemed trustworthy for gauging psychological contract violation, turnover intention, and work satisfaction. The test results showed that all constructs conformed to the established criteria for convergent validity.

Table 3. Model Fit Test

Parameter	ROT	P-Value	Description
SRMR	Less than 0.10	0.064	Fit
d_ULS	> 0.05	0.706	Fit
d_G	> 0.05	0.534	Fit
NFI	Approaching the value 1	0.847	Quite fit
GoF	0.1 (small GOF), 0.25 (moderate GOF), 0.36 (strong GOF)	0.655	Strong fit

Table 3 shows that the model can be deemed fit because the SRMR value of 0.064 is less than the 0.10 requirement. The parameters d_ULS (0.706) and d_G (0.534) are both greater than 0.05, indicating good model fit. The NFI value of 0.847 is close to 1, suggesting the model meets the model feasibility criteria. Meanwhile, the GoF value of 0.655 exceeds the threshold of 0.36, indicating a strong fit. The findings indicate that the research model achieved a good fit.

Table 4. R-square Test

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Job Satisfaction	0.555	0.548
Turnover Intention	0.657	0.646

According to Table 4, the job satisfaction construct has an R^2 value of 0.555 with an adjusted R^2 of 0.548, indicating that psychological contract violation accounts for 55.5% of the variance in job satisfaction. Additionally, the turnover intention construct has an R^2 of 0.657 with an adjusted R^2 of 0.646, meaning that psychological contract violations and work satisfaction account for 65.7% of the variation in employees' intention to leave. According to the criteria by Hair et al. (2019), this research model is suitable for hypothesis testing because the R^2 values of 0.555 and 0.657 are categorized as moderate to strong.

Table 5. Direct Effect Test

Relationship Path	Original sample O	T-statistic	P-values	F-square
H1. Psychological Contract Violation -> Turnover Intention	0.587	4.668	0.000	0.447
H2. Psychological Contract Violation -> Job Satisfaction	-0.745	14.917	0.000	1.247
H3. Job Satisfaction -> Turnover Intention	-0.272	2.251	0.024	0.096

Table 5 shows that the association between psychological contract violation and turnover intention is significant at the 1% level with a positively signed coefficient

of 0.587, a T value of 4.668, and $p < 0.01$. The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention has a coefficient of -0.272 with a T value of 2.251 and $P = 0.024$, significant at the 5% level, with an f^2 of 0.096 or a weak category. Meanwhile, A moderate influence is shown by the f^2 value of 0.447. With a negative coefficient of 0.745, a T value of 14.917, and a $P < 0.01$, the link between psychological contract violation and job satisfaction is very significant, falling into the very strong category with an f^2 of 1.247. Thus, the results support the initial hypothesis, indicating that experiencing a psychological contract violation significantly impacts both job satisfaction and employees' turnover intentions, with job satisfaction exerting a comparatively weak influence on turnover intention.

Table 6. Mediation Test

Relationship Path	Original sample O	T-Statistic	P-values
H4. Psychological Contract Violation -> Job Satisfaction -> Turnover Intention	0.203	2.140	0.032

Table 6 shows that there is a significant indirect influence between psychological contract violation and turnover intention, with job satisfaction acting as a mediator, with a coefficient of 0.203, a T-value of 2.140, and $p = 0.032 < 0.05$. The findings suggest that employees' willingness to quit their positions is influenced by psychological contract violations, with job satisfaction acting as a partly mediating variable. As a result, the findings successfully address the study's objective by confirming that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between psychological contract violation and turnover intention.

5. Discussion

This study shows that the work attitudes and actions of civil servants at TVRI in the Special Region of Yogyakarta are greatly impacted by psychological contract violation. The psychological contract theory, which highlights the significance of implicit pledges in job interactions, is in line with our findings (He et al., 2023). In particular, workers' job satisfaction tends to decline and their intention to leave the company rises when they perceive a violation of their psychological contract. This is consistent with earlier studies showing that unfulfilled expectations can increase turnover intention and cause disappointment (Zhao et al., 2007; Yang et al., 2025).

The study also emphasizes how job happiness can lessen the inclination to leave. Workers that are content with their jobs typically show emotional attachment and commitment to the company (Hasan et al., 2021; Hadj, 2024). However, its impact on turnover intention is not absolute because judgments of psychological contract violation can have an impact on job satisfaction. To put it another way, job satisfaction has two roles: it results from unsatisfactory work experiences and acts as a partial mediator between employees' decision to leave and psychological contract violations (Yu & Hamid, 2024; Akca, 2024).

When compared to previous studies, these findings exhibit both similarities and nuances. For instance, Azeem et al. (2020) found that psychological contract violation increases job dissatisfaction and work disengagement, which directly contribute to turnover intention, consistent with the present results. Conversely, Faizan et al. (2025) emphasized that organizational commitment and supervisor support can attenuate the effect of contract breaches on turnover intention, suggesting the presence of moderating factors that this study did not fully explore. Additionally, studies in the education and healthcare sectors Amoah et al. (2021) and Pyhäjärvi and Söderberg (2024) demonstrated similar mediation mechanisms through job satisfaction and employee engagement, reinforcing the generalizability of the present findings across different types of public organizations.

Thus, this study not only confirms the principles of psychological contract theory but also contributes to the literature by elucidating the mediating role of job satisfaction in public sector organizations in Indonesia. These findings suggest that interventions aimed at enhancing job satisfaction such as improving communication, ensuring transparency in organizational promises, and providing managerial support may serve as effective strategies to reduce turnover intention arising from psychological contract violations.

According to the study's conclusions, TVRI Yogyakarta Special Region management should give top priority to factors that affect worker satisfaction, especially the workplace. Additionally, the inclination of workers to think about quitting suggests that retention tactics need to be strengthened by offering chances for professional growth and encouraging more candid communication in order to preserve employee loyalty. Additionally, the study's theoretical implications validate that a major factor that lowers job satisfaction and raises turnover intention is psychological contract violation. Nevertheless, the coefficient of determination data show that turnover intention is influenced by factors not included in this research model. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing turnover intention, future research should take into account factors including organizational commitment, procedural justice, and superior support.

6. Conclusion

This study shows that, with work satisfaction serving as a partial mediator, psychological contract violation is associated with poorer job satisfaction and increased turnover intention. The results show that when companies don't live up to employee expectations or implicit pledges, confidence erodes and employees are more likely to quit. This is consistent with other research that highlights the need of matching corporate commitment to employee expectations in order to reduce contract violations, which in turn improves job satisfaction and lowers the desire to leave.

These findings offer management useful advice on how to deal with psychological contract violations in the context of TVRI government servants as part of a long-term human resource strategy. Important actions include strengthening fairness and transparency in employment practices, guaranteeing consistent policy execution, and enhancing communication between managers and staff. Organizations may sustain maximum work satisfaction and reduce employee turnover by keeping organizational commitment and employee expectations in line.

This study has limitations that may constrain the generalizability of its findings. The relatively small sample and focus on a single public institution limit its applicability to other organizations. Additionally, the cross-sectional design prevents observation of changes in employee perceptions over time. Future research should broaden the scope to multiple institutions or sectors and adopt longitudinal designs to capture the dynamics of psychological contract perceptions. Incorporating additional variables, such as organizational commitment, perceived fairness, or supervisor support, could further enrich the model and provide deeper insight into the factors influencing the relationships among psychological contract violation, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. Such research would contribute both theoretically and practically, offering more comprehensive guidance for managing employee expectations and enhancing retention.

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Data Disclosure Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



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