

# Understanding Job Attrition Behaviour: The Role of Psycho-Social Determinants

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the psychological and social factors influencing job attrition behaviour using the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) and personality interaction frameworks. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with N = 620 employees across diverse sectors. Standardized scales measured attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, turnover intentions, and job attrition behaviour. Reliability analyses demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.86-0.92$  across constructs). Correlation analyses revealed significant associations between psychological and social predictors and attrition behaviour ( $r = .42-.61, p < .01$ ). Regression analysis showed that attitude ( $\beta = .31, p < .001$ ), subjective norms ( $\beta = .27, p < .001$ ), and perceived behavioural control ( $\beta = .24, p < .01$ ) significantly predicted attrition behaviour, explaining 46% of the variance ( $R^2 = .46$ ). Moderation analyses indicated that conscientiousness and neuroticism influenced the strength of the relationship between turnover intention and attrition behaviour. Group comparisons showed higher attrition intentions among younger employees, males, and private-sector workers. The findings highlight the importance of addressing workplace culture, peer influence, and psychological perceptions of control in designing retention strategies. This study contributes to organizational psychology by validating a DTPB-based framework for attrition research in the Indian workforce.*

**Keywords:** job attrition, turnover behaviour, psychosocial factors, DTPB, workplace culture, personality traits, employee retention, organizational psychology

## 1. Introduction

Employee attrition remains one of the most pressing challenges for organizations globally, particularly in developing economies such as India where dynamic labour markets and socio-economic transitions drive frequent job shifts. Traditional economic models often explain attrition behaviour in terms of salary dissatisfaction, career advancement opportunities, or macroeconomic conditions. However, such explanations fail to fully capture the **psychological and social determinants** of attrition, such as workplace culture, perceived support, peer influence, and individual personality dispositions. The present study integrates the **Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB)** with personality trait frameworks to investigate how attitudes, social norms, perceived behavioural control, and personality characteristics collectively influence attrition behaviour. This approach provides a **multi-level explanatory model**, aligning behavioural intentions with both **internal psychological states** and **external social contexts**.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To examine the impact of psychological (attitude, perceived control) and social (subjective norms, workplace culture) factors on job attrition behaviour.
- 2) To evaluate the moderating role of personality traits (Big Five) in attrition behaviour.
- 3) To explore demographic differences (gender, age, sector, education) in attrition patterns.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Participants

A total of **620 participants** were recruited using **convenience sampling** across sectors including IT, manufacturing, education, and services.

- **Gender:** Male (n = 347, 56%), Female (n = 273, 44%)
- **Age:** 21–59 years (M = 34.2, SD = 7.9)

- **Occupation:** Private sector (n = 402, 64.8%), Public sector (n = 138, 22.3%), Self-employed/Other (n = 80, 12.9%)
- **Education:** Graduation (38.5%), Post graduation (41.2%), High School/Diploma (20.3%)

The sample of **620 participants** was adequate to ensure statistical power for advanced analyses, with sizes above 500 considered stable for multi-variable psychosocial research (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). The participant pool intentionally included diverse occupations (IT, manufacturing, education, services) and both private and public sector employees to capture sector-specific nuances and enable meaningful group comparisons. The **age range (21–59 years, M = 34.2)** represented early-, mid-, and late-career professionals, aligning with India's workforce demographics where attrition is most pronounced in IT and services. A relatively balanced **gender distribution (56% male, 44% female)** allowed exploration of gender-based differences in attrition, while the inclusion of varied educational backgrounds (Graduation, Post-graduation, Diploma/High School) ensured representation across skill levels. Overall, the sample design enhanced representativeness and external validity, while remaining practical under convenience sampling constraints.

### 2.2 Instruments

- 1) **DTPB-based Job Attrition Scale** – measuring Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioural Control, Turnover Intentions, and Attrition Behaviour.
- 2) **Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI-20)** – measuring Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism.
- 3) **Demographic Sheet** – capturing age, gender, education, and sector.

### 2.3 Procedure

Participants provided informed consent prior to participation. The questionnaire was administered through an interview-

based method, where the researcher orally presented each question and recorded the responses directly into a Google Form. To maintain confidentiality, no personally identifying information was collected, thereby ensuring complete anonymity.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

- **Reliability:** Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and KR-20 (for binary indicators).
- **Descriptive Statistics:** Means, SDs, frequencies.
- **Correlation Analysis:** Pearson's  $r$  among all variables.
- **Regression Analysis:** Multiple regression for predictors of attrition.
- **Moderation/Mediation:** Interaction analysis for personality traits.
- **Group Comparisons:** Independent  $t$ -tests, ANOVA across demographics.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Descriptive Statistics

- **Turnover Intention:**  $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 0.91$
- **Attrition Behaviour:**  $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = 0.88$
- **Attitude:**  $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 0.82$
- **Subjective Norms:**  $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 0.79$
- **Perceived Control:**  $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 0.85$

### 3.2 Reliability

- **Cronbach's Alpha:** Attitude (0.89), Subjective Norms (0.87), Perceived Control (0.85), Turnover Intention (0.91), Attrition Behaviour (0.86).
- **Overall Internal Consistency:** 0.90

### 3.3 Correlation Analysis

- Attitude  $\rightarrow$  Attrition ( $r = .58$ ,  $p < .001$ )
- Subjective Norms  $\rightarrow$  Attrition ( $r = .52$ ,  $p < .001$ )
- Perceived Control  $\rightarrow$  Attrition ( $r = .49$ ,  $p < .001$ )
- Turnover Intention  $\rightarrow$  Attrition ( $r = .61$ ,  $p < .001$ )

### 3.4 Regression Analysis

- Attitude ( $\beta = .31$ ,  $p < .001$ )
- Subjective Norms ( $\beta = .27$ ,  $p < .001$ )
- Perceived Control ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .01$ )
- $R^2 = .46 \rightarrow 46\%$  of variance explained

### 3.5 Moderation & Mediation

- **Conscientiousness:** Strengthened link between intention and behaviour ( $\beta$  interaction = .18,  $p < .05$ ).
- **Neuroticism:** Amplified attrition under high stress ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $p < .01$ ).
- **3.6 Group Comparisons**
- **Gender:** Males ( $M = 3.58$ ) reported higher attrition intentions than females ( $M = 3.21$ ),  $t(618) = 2.87$ ,  $p < .01$ .
- **Age:** Younger employees (<30 years) had significantly higher attrition scores ( $M = 3.65$ ) than older employees (>40 years;  $M = 2.91$ ),  $F(2,617) = 6.34$ ,  $p < .01$ .

- **Sector:** Private sector workers showed higher attrition ( $M = 3.72$ ) than public sector ( $M = 3.04$ ),  $t(538) = 4.12$ ,  $p < .001$ .

## 4. Discussion

The findings confirm that **psychological and social factors**—specifically attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control—are significant predictors of job attrition behaviour. These results align with the **DTPB framework**, which emphasizes the interplay of internal perceptions and external influences in shaping behavioural intentions. The moderation analysis highlights the role of personality, with conscientiousness buffering against impulsive attrition, while neuroticism increases vulnerability to stress-driven exits. These results extend prior research by demonstrating personality's dynamic role in **attrition pathways**. From a practical standpoint, organizations must **strengthen workplace culture**, reduce stigma around retention discussions, and provide greater autonomy and support. Policies targeting younger employees, private-sector environments, and employees with high neuroticism could significantly reduce attrition.

## 5. Limitations and Future Directions

This study, though based on a large and diverse sample, is limited by its use of convenience sampling, self-reported measures, and a cross-sectional design, which restrict causal inference and may introduce bias. Future research should adopt longitudinal and mixed-method approaches, expand demographic and sectoral diversity, and integrate organizational-level factors such as leadership and workplace culture. Evaluating preventive interventions and applying advanced statistical models will further strengthen understanding of psychosocial drivers of job attrition and inform practical strategies for retention.

## 6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that job attrition behaviour is shaped by a complex interaction of **psychological, social, and personality factors**, extending beyond financial or organizational concerns. Using a **DTPB-based model with personality traits**, we established a reliable framework that explained **46% of the variance in attrition behaviour**, underscoring its predictive strength. The findings highlight attrition as a **human behavioural outcome** influenced by stress, workplace relationships, and personality dispositions, offering organizations clear directions for targeted retention strategies. By fostering **psychological safety, social support, and personality-sensitive interventions**, organizations can move beyond generic solutions toward evidence-based workforce practices. Future **longitudinal and cross-cultural studies** are recommended to refine causal pathways and strengthen the model's generalizability. This research provides both theoretical and practical contributions by bridging behavioural psychology with organizational practice, paving the way for more effective retention strategies in Indian and global contexts.

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