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**ACTUAL VOLUNTARY TURNOVER:  
A STUDY OF JOB EMBEDDEDNESS, PAY  
SATISFACTION, AND PERCEIVED ALTERNATIVE  
JOB OPPORTUNITIES**



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**Thesis Submitted to  
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## ABSTRACT

Past literature supports negative links between job embeddedness, pay satisfaction and actual voluntary turnover (AVT), several meta-analytical studies have reported weaker links between these constructs. As a result, calls for further research has been suggested, particularly on the interactive process through which both job embeddedness and pay satisfaction are likely to influence AVT. The purpose of this study was also to explore the likely interactive effect of perceived alternative job opportunities on job embeddedness, pay satisfaction, and AVT. A mixed-method approach was used. Data were obtained from a survey sample of 216 and nine interviewed former faculty members of public universities in Nigeria. Using partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), the quantitative results indicated that both organizational embeddedness and pay satisfaction were significantly and negatively related to AVT. On the contrary, community embeddedness demonstrated no significant effect on AVT. The results further showed that perceived alternative job opportunities moderated the relationship between organizational embeddedness and AVT, as well as between pay satisfaction and AVT. But, no significant interaction effect was found between perceived alternative job opportunities and community embeddedness. In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The results of the interviews showed that the dysfunctional nature of the university's work environment and longer commute time were important contributors to their reason for leaving. The qualitative result also revealed that the disparity in pay between public and private universities played a critical role in the participants' decisions to actually leave. Additionally, unsolicited job offer was also identified as another reason that influenced their turnover decisions. Overall, the qualitative results complemented the survey findings in that they were able to further clarify and elaborate the latter. Implications of the results for future research and practice, as well as the limitations of the study are highlighted.

**Keywords:** actual voluntary turnover, job embeddedness, pay satisfaction, perceived alternative job opportunities, mixed-method, Nigeria

## ABSTRAK

Kesusasteraan masa lalu menyokong hubungan negatif antara sematan pekerjaan, kepuasan bayaran, dan lantik henti sebenar secara sukarela (AVT), beberapa kajian meta analisis telah melaporkan pautan lemah antara konstruk-konstruk ini. Akibatnya, terdapat panggilan mengenai kajian yang lebih lanjut bagi meneliti hubungan ini terutamanya yang melibatkan proses interaktif antara kedua-dua sematan kerja dan kepuasan bayaran yang mungkin mempengaruhi AVT. Tujuan kajian ini juga adalah untuk meneroka kesan interaktif kemungkinan peluang pekerjaan alternatif ditanggap terhadap sematan pekerjaan, kepuasan bayaran, dan AVT. Pendekatan kaedah bercampur telah digunakan. Data dikutip daripada tinjauan terhadap 216 orang bekas ahli fakulti dan sembilan fakulti yang telah ditemuramah di universiti awam di Nigeria. Dengan menggunakan *partial least square structural equation modelling* (PLS-SEM), keputusan kuantitatif menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua sematan organisasi dan kepuasan bayaran berkait dengan AVT secara signifikan dan negatif. Sebaliknya, sematan masyarakat tidak menunjukkan kesan ketara terhadap AVT. Keputusan seterusnya menunjukkan bahawa peluang pekerjaan alternatif ditanggap menyederhana hubungan antara sematan organisasi dan AVT, serta antara kepuasan gaji dan AVT. Tetapi, tiada kesan interaksi yang signifikan antara peluang pekerjaan alternatif ditanggap dan sematan masyarakat. Di samping tinjauan soal selidik, temu bual separa berstruktur telah dijalankan. Hasil temu bual menunjukkan bahawa persekitaran kerja universiti yang lemah dan masa berulang-alik yang panjang merupakan penyumbang penting ahli fakulti akademik meninggalkan pekerjaan mereka. Dapatan kualitatif juga menunjukkan bahawa perbezaan jurang gaji antara universiti awam dan swasta memainkan peranan penting bagi peserta membuat keputusan meninggalkan pekerjaan lama mereka. Selain itu, tawaran pekerjaan yang tidak diminta juga telah dikenal pasti sebagai satu lagi penyebab yang mempengaruhi keputusan mereka untuk berhenti. Secara keseluruhan, dapatan kualitatif melengkapi hasil tinjauan kerana dapatan temu bual dapat menerangkan dan menghuraikan keputusan kuantitatif. Implikasi penyelidikan terhadap kajian akan datang dan amalan serta batasan kajian ini turut diketengahkan.

**Kata kunci:** lantik henti sebenar secara sukarela, sematan pekerjaan, kepuasan bayaran, peluang pekerjaan alternatif ditanggap, kaedah bercampur, Nigeria

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASUU	Academic Staff Union of Universities
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
AVT	Actual Voluntary Turnover
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis
CMV	Common Method Variance
EM	Expectation Maximization
EOI	Employment Opportunity Index
HEI	Higher Education Institution
JET	Job Embeddedness Theory
MI	Multiple Imputations
MVA	Missing Value Analysis
NUC	National Universities Commission
PAJO	Perceived Alternative Job Opportunities
PSQ	Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SIT	Social Interdependence Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

In the recent past, actual voluntary turnover (AVT) has become a subject of importance among practitioners and researchers of organizational behavior (Allen, Bryan, & Vardaman, 2010; Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2013; Segrest, Andrews, & Hurley-Hanson, 2015). As a self-initiated behavior (Morrell, Loan-Clarke, & Wilkinson, 2001), actual voluntary turnover occurs when employees actually disengage or leave the organization on their own accord (Böckermann, Ilmakunnas, Jokisaari, & Vuori, 2013; Davidson & Wang, 2011). In this instance, the actual permanent voluntary disengagement may have been influenced by another job which offers more in terms of meeting employee expectation, changes in personal circumstances, or a change in career direction (Donnelly & Quirin, 2006). Put differently, actual voluntary turnover refers to an employee exercising his or her free choice to voluntarily leave a current employment in favor of opportunities identified with another (Beecroft, Dorey, & Wenten, 2008).

As a costly and pervasive phenomenon, actual voluntary turnover has continued to draw the attention of practitioners and researchers (Clausen, Hogh, Carneiro, & Borg, 2013; Huffman, Casper, & Payne, 2014; Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012; Law, 2010; Maertz & Boyar, 2012; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013; Steel & Lounsbury, 2009). Existing literature has shown that AVT not only results in

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