

# A Decade of Turnover Intention Research in IT: Key Insights

Wagner Vidal Xavier da Silva<sup>1</sup>, Suzana Sampaio<sup>2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Graduate Program in Administration and Development – Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco (UFRPE), Recife – PE – Brazil

<sup>2</sup>Computer Department – Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco (UFRPE)  
Recife – PE – Brazil

<sup>3</sup>University of Galway, School of Engineering - Galway - Ireland

{wagner.vidal, suzana.sampaio}@ufrpe.br

**Abstract.** *Employee turnover intention poses challenges for IT organizations, affecting performance and strategic goals. Despite research efforts, the factors driving turnover remain fragmented. This study conducted a systematic literature review of research published between 2015 and 2024, using PRISMA guidelines. A total of 41 studies were analyzed, identifying 29 internal and 25 external factors. Job satisfaction was the most cited internal factor, while organizational commitment was the most frequent external factor. Burnout also emerged as a key driver. These findings support IT organizations in developing targeted HR strategies to improve retention.*

## 1. Introduction

Information Technology (IT) is one of the fastest-growing industries, standing out as one of the most promising business segments for economic development on a global scale [Farooq *et al.*, 2022]. According to [Sandhya and Sulphrey, 2019], more than 30% of significant growth has witnessed \$150 billion in the IT and software industry in the last few years. This growth is expected to require around 546,100 new jobs over the next few years [Moquin *et al.*, 2019]. However, the IT sector is facing major challenges, such as rapid technological changes, continual training and retooling of IT professionals, high employee turnover, and economic fluctuations [Gefen *et al.*, 2015; Moquin *et al.*, 2019].

The fast-paced environment of the IT industry, coupled with high expectations of innovation and productivity, creates significant stress and pressure on employees [Ajayi and Udeh, 2024]. Due to that, to maintain professional competence, IT professionals must remain updated on technological advancements and uphold their knowledge base [Pereira *et al.*, 2024]. Moreover, the IT industry has a culture of constant connectivity, high technical expertise, continuous learning, and extended periods of focused work, often under tight deadlines [Ajayi and Udeh, 2024]. In this way, the boundaries between work and personal life can be blurred, further exacerbating stress levels and decreasing overall well-being [Lo, 2015]. This dynamic often leads to burnout among IT professionals [Ajayi and Udeh, 2024].

In such a high-pressure environment, retaining professionals becomes a persistent challenge, particularly for the IT sector [Joseph *et al.*, 2007]. This challenge is further amplified by the phenomenon of turnover intention. Turnover intention refers to the employee's desire to seek new job opportunities or voluntarily switch companies [Pereira *et al.*, 2024]. It is also recognized as a significant predictor of voluntary job resignation [Chouhan, 2022]. Furthermore, this phenomenon directly impacts the organizational well-being and disrupts the supply and demand of the IT labor market [Lo, 2015]. Moreover, previous studies have demonstrated that employees with high turnover intention often display poor performance and high absenteeism rates [Chouhan, 2022].

Turnover intention can negatively impact organizations by leading to the loss of critical skills, knowledge and abilities, ultimately resulting in high replacement costs and a reduced revenue (current and/or future) [Scholtz *et al.*, 2019]. Consequently, mitigating the pretentiousness of this phenomenon has become the focus of attention for the IT industry in recent years [Kumar, 2022]. This concern is legitimate because of the financial repercussions of high turnover rates in an industry that continuously reports poor employee retention [Lo, 2015]. The IT sector is among the top four industries with poor employee retention rates [Rhatigan, 2016] and overall human capital has a significant role in shaping the financial performance of IT organizations [Chouhan, 2022; Gupta and Raman, 2021].

Many variables influence employee turnover intentions [Kanchana and Jayathilaka, 2023]. However, the causes of employee turnover intention are multiple and complex, and still poorly understood globally [Cohen *et al.*, 2016]. To address this salient and persistent issue, the present study systematically reviews the literature on turnover intention among IT professionals from 2015 to 2024. Preliminary results indicate that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are potential constructs in the analyses. Furthermore, the survey method is utilized in most of the studies. Another introductory point is the prevalence of studies in countries with technological prominence, such as the United States and India.

By identifying and analyzing key factors contributing to turnover intention, this study aims to provide actionable insights for IT organizations to develop more effective retention strategies as a potential means to mitigate turnover intention and its associated challenges. Specifically, it examines antecedents of turnover intention, and methodological approaches, highlighting research gaps and laying the groundwork for future studies. In this context, understanding these elements is crucial in a landscape where the demand for qualified talent exceeds supply [Chouhan, 2022]. Thus, it is essential to mitigate turnover and ensure the retention of a skilled workforce [Pereira *et al.*, 2024].

Thus, to achieve these objectives, the study addresses the primary research question: "What are the main factors influencing turnover intention decisions among IT professionals according to the existing literature?". The following sections of this article are structured as follows. Section 2 introduces the background and related works about the theme. Section 3 documents the research method applied. Section 4 highlights the results, their implications, and discussion, respectively. Finally, section 5 marks the conclusion, limitations, and future research directions.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 Turnover Intention**

Turnover intention refers to an employee's likelihood of leaving an organization voluntarily. In the IT sector, this issue is particularly prevalent due to job stress, lack of satisfaction, and inadequate compensation [Al-Dalahmeh *et al.*, 2020; Pereira *et al.*, 2024]. Besides that, IT professionals leave the organization due to poor relationships with supervisors, co-workers, and management [Farooq *et al.*, 2022]. Stressors such as job overload [Sarker *et al.*, 2019] also contribute to turnover intention [Tulili *et al.*, 2023].

In the IT sector, a high rate of turnover intention has been noticed due to different challenging issues such as work stress, lack of job satisfaction, and inefficient compensation plans [Al-Dalahmeh *et al.*, 2020; Pereira *et al.*, 2024]. In addition, IT employees face constant changes that accompany rapid technological leaps in the field [Prommegger *et al.*, 2019]. Furthermore, IT professionals suffer from high project error rates that typically occur in IT projects [Standish Group, 2015] and are, therefore, often exposed to feelings of failure [Rampadaruth, 2022]. In this way, mental health is impacted by the constant scenarios of change and tension, increasing the desire to leave work, which is a key factor contributing to burnout among IT professionals [Ajayi and Udeh, 2024].

Burnout is a key factor in turnover intentions, which negatively impacts mental health and job satisfaction [Ajayi and Udeh, 2024]. Burnout is often triggered by excessive workload, inadequate recognition, and poor work-life balance, making IT professionals more susceptible to leaving their jobs [Rampadaruth, 2022]. Job satisfaction plays a critical role, as dissatisfied employees are more likely to seek alternative opportunities [Farooq *et al.*, 2022].

Global studies highlight the financial impact of turnover. Due to the shortage of skilled and talented employees, IT organizations have to bear the projected financial loss in revenue, such as the United States \$435.7 billion in 2020 [Farooq *et al.*, 2022]. High turnover rates lead to financial losses, knowledge drain, and recruitment challenges [Ajit, 2016; Witt and Burke, 2002]. Understanding the factors driving turnover intention is vital to developing effective retention strategies [Kanchana and Jayathilaka, 2023].

### **2.2 Employee Retention**

Employee retention focuses on organizational efforts to keep skilled workers engaged and committed [Kong, 2022]. In the IT sector, where demand for qualified professionals exceeds supply, companies invest heavily in retention strategies [Kumar, 2022]. Retaining qualified IT professionals to strengthen organizational performance and competitiveness [Zaza *et al.*, 2022]. High-performing employees contribute significantly to organizational success, making retention a priority [Serenko *et al.*, 2022].

Effective retention strategies include competitive salaries, career growth opportunities, and supportive work environments [Al Akasheh *et al.*, 2024]. Organizations also focus on job satisfaction and engagement to reduce turnover [Pereira *et al.*, 2024]. Studies indicate that employees with higher job satisfaction and

organizational commitment exhibit lower turnover intentions [Mahindru *et al.*, 2023].

## 2.3 Related Work

Prior research on turnover intention has identified multiple influencing factors, including job satisfaction, burnout, and organizational commitment [Farooq *et al.*, 2022; Serenko *et al.*, 2022]. A study in Japan found that work exhaustion and job satisfaction mediate turnover intention [Serenko *et al.*, 2022]. Another study in Pakistan identified job security, salary, and career management as significant factors [Farooq *et al.*, 2022]. [Alla and Rajaa, 2019] conducted a literature review on employee turnover. The authors concluded that turnover has negative repercussions on the psychological and productivity of employees as well as on the overall organizational performance.

However, it does not directly portray which attributes impact on turnover intention. This study addresses this gap by compiling, through an SLR, the key attributes that influence turnover intention. Moreover, this study extends previous research by analyzing turnover intention globally, covering a broader timeframe (2015–2024). Unlike earlier reviews, it incorporates additional factors such as work integration, burnout, and perceived workload [Farooq *et al.*, 2022]. By consolidating findings, this review offers actionable insights to mitigate turnover and improve retention strategies in the IT sector, and support managers and leaders in effectively mitigating this phenomenon.

## 3. Research Method

This study follows a systematic literature review (SLR) approach, employing the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method. The review aims on answering the research question: *“What are the main factors influencing turnover intention decisions among IT professionals according to the existing literature?”*

To ensure rigor, the methodology aligns with [Kitchenham and Charters, 2007] guidelines, covering research questions, inclusion/exclusion criteria and search strategy. Figure 1 illustrates the study selection process, summarizing how studies were filtered and finalized. The study was conducted by two researchers.

### 3.1. Data Collection

Four electronic repositories were selected: IEEE Xplore, ScienceDirect, ACM Digital, and Google Scholar. The search period spans 2015–2024, reflecting the growing influence of digital transformation and trends around the digital economy, which have been catalyzed by the COVID-19 pandemic, indicate a significant increase in functions and occupations in the IT area [Souza *et al.*, 2023].

The following string was selected also based on the work of [Farooq *et al.*, 2022]: (“turnover intention” OR “job change” OR “turn away” OR “job mobility” OR “job movement” OR “job flow” OR “career change”) AND (“software developer” OR “IT professional” OR “IT personnel” OR “software engineer” OR “software coder” OR “developer” OR “tester”) AND (“software industry” OR “IT industry” OR “software engineering”) applied to the title,

abstract, and keywords. For the Science Direct repository, the research string was adapted due to the limitation of only eight Boolean operators. As a result, the adjusted string was structured as follows: ("turnover intention" AND "software industry") OR ("turnover intention" AND "IT industry") OR ("turnover intention" AND "IT professional").

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were outlined as follows, adapted from the work of [Farooq *et al.*, 2022]. Inclusion criteria involved: studies written in English; peer-reviewed journal or conference papers published between 2015–2024; and research addressing turnover factors in IT/software sectors. Exclusion criteria included: non- English studies; book chapters, white papers, workshop reports; duplicates or inaccessible studies; and studies not relevant to the topic. Figure 1 illustrates the study selection process, summarizing how studies were filtered and finalized.

### 3.2. Study Selection Process

The selection followed PRISMA's four-step process:

1. Identification – 20,252 studies retrieved from databases
2. Screening – Filtering by title, abstract, keywords, and relevance
3. Eligibility – Exclusion of inaccessible or duplicate papers
4. Inclusion – Final selection of 41 primary studies for analysis

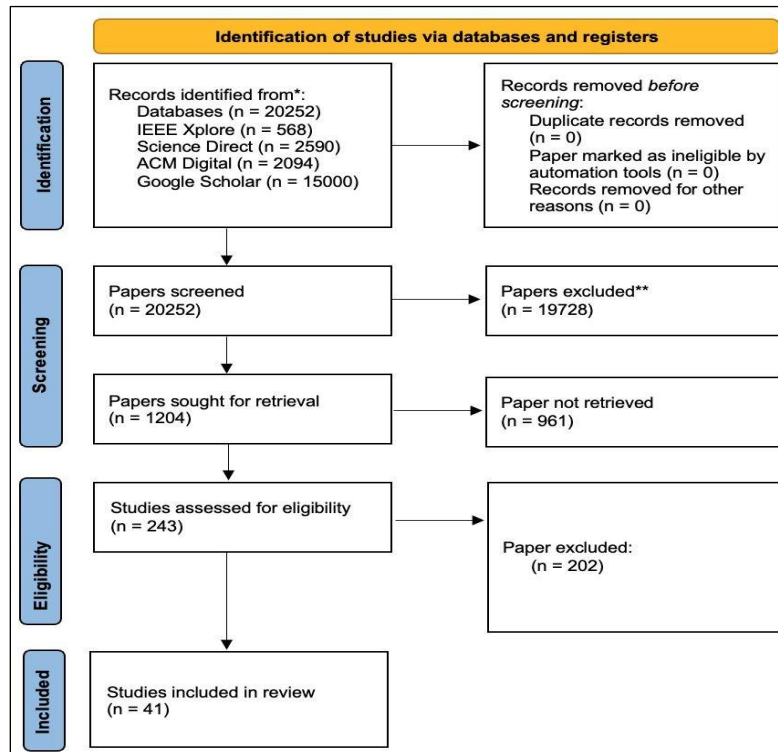


Figure 1. Selection process

### 3.3. Data Extraction and Synthesis

In this phase, all remaining studies were analyzed, for data extraction and synthesis. The analysis focused on turnover intention factors, classified as:

- internal (job satisfaction, burnout, demographic attributes);
- or external (organizational commitment, compensation, leadership style).

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Overview of primary studies

This SLR identified 41 relevant studies investigating the factors that impact turnover intention among IT professionals, as described in Table 2. The factors are classified as internal (demographics, job satisfaction, burnout) and external (organizational commitment, leadership style, compensation), as presented in the work of [Pratiwi *et al.*, 2024]. Internal factors include personality traits such as extraversion, openness, emotional resilience, and assertiveness, while external factors encompass aspects related to professional development, organizational skills and knowledge, supportive supervisors, and career anchors [Chouhan, 2022]. Additionally, each study was meticulously analyzed and classified according to its method and country of origin.

**Table 1. Primary studies and key findings**

Author, Year	Country	Method	Factors affecting turnover intention	
			Internal	External
[Abid <i>et al.</i> , 2016]	Pakistan	Quantitative	Demographic (Age; Education; Gender; Organizational Tenure) Perceived Organizational Support	Heedful Relating
[Al Akasheh <i>et al.</i> , 2024]	Arab Emirates	Quantitative	Job Satisfaction Job Involvement	Job Environment
[Apostel <i>et al.</i> , 2018]	Germany	Quantitative	-	Illegitimate Tasks
[Armstrong <i>et al.</i> , 2018]	United States	Quantitative	Work Exhaustion	Organizational Commitment
[Atouba, 2018]	United States	Quantitative	Employee Work Participation Organizational Identification	Internal Communication Adequacy
[Booyesen and Malan, 2024]	South Africa	Literature Review	Satisfaction With Benefits	Job Embeddedness Supportive Organizational Climate Transformational Leadership
[Chiu, 2017]	Taiwan	Quantitative	Job Crafting	-
[Cho <i>et al.</i> , 2020]	Korea	Quantitative	Job Satisfaction	-
[Chouhan, 2022]	India	Quantitative	Career Adaptability	-
[Dinger <i>et al.</i> , 2015]	United States	Quantitative	Perceived Job Alternatives Intrinsic Motivation Job Satisfaction Affective Commitment	-

[Dunukara and Pushpakumari, 2021]	Sri Lanka	Quantitative	-	Advancement Opportunities Pay and Benefits Job Security Supervisor/Management Relations Peer Relations
[Eckhardt <i>et al.</i> , 2016]	Germany	Quantitative	Personality Traits Neuroticism Extraversion Conscientiousness	-
[Farooq <i>et al.</i> , 2022]	Pakistan	Quantitative	Employee Commitment Recognition Employee Experience Education Level	Recruitment & Selection Team & Management Support Performance & Career Management Salary & Compensation Job Security Organizational Demographics (Organization Size and Department Size)
[Gumussoy, 2016]	Turkey	Quantitative	Job Satisfaction Career Commitment Conscientiousness Openness To Experience Career Satisfaction	-
[Haran and Niederman, 2022]	India	Quantitative	Job Satisfaction Organizational Justice	-
[Harden <i>et al.</i> , 2018]	United States	Quantitative	Perceived Work Overload Perceived Skill Obsolescence Fairness of Rewards	Organizational Commitment
[Haridas <i>et al.</i> , 2022]	India	Quantitative	-	Organizational Career Management
[Idell <i>et al.</i> , 2021]	United States	Quantitative	Distrust in organization	-
[Kanchana and Jayathilaka, 2023]	Sri Lanka	Quantitative	Job Satisfaction Demographic (Gender: Male)	-
[Moquin <i>et al.</i> , 2019]	United States	Quantitative	Psychological contract breach	-
[Mufitha <i>et al.</i> , 2019]	Sri Lanka	Quantitative	Job Satisfaction Professional Commitment	-
[Naqvi and Bashir, 2015]	Pakistan	Quantitative	-	Supervisor Support
[Pereira <i>et al.</i> , 2024]	Brazil	Qualitative	Satisfaction With Compensations (Salary)	Remote Work
[Ramalho Luz <i>et al.</i> , 2018]	Brazil	Quantitative	Demographic (Age) Affective Commitment Normative Commitment Job Satisfaction Satisfaction With Pay Satisfaction With Promotions	Organizational Commitment

			Satisfaction With The Nature of The Work	
[Ramaprasad <i>et al.</i> , 2021]	Indian	Quantitative	Work Engagement	High-Performance Work Systems Organizational Commitment
[Rusbadrol <i>et al.</i> , 2017]	Malaysia	Qualitative	Organizational Justice	-
[Santoso <i>et al.</i> , 2023]	Indonesia	Qualitative	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Commitment
[Sasaki <i>et al.</i> , 2019]	Japan	Quantitative	Job Satisfaction	-
[Scholtz <i>et al.</i> , 2019]	South Africa	Quantitative	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Size Occupational Culture
[Serenko <i>et al.</i> , 2022]	Japan	Quantitative	Job Satisfaction	-
[Sethar <i>et al.</i> , 2022]	Pakistan	Quantitative	Job Satisfaction	-
[Setiawan <i>et al.</i> , 2024]	Jakarta	Quantitative	Employee Engagement	-
[Sharma and Stol, 2020]	Ireland	Quantitative	Job Satisfaction	-
[Singh, 2024]	India	Quantitative	Work-Life Balance	Organizational Commitment
[Sivarethnamohan and Aranganathan, 2015]	India	Quantitative	Role Ambiguity Role conflict Work Exhaustion Promotion Satisfaction Fairness of individual rewards Job security	Supervisor's feedback Leader Member exchange Work Schedule Flexibility Career accommodation
[Souza <i>et al.</i> , 2023]	Brazil	Literature Review	Perception Of Material Support	Performance Management Compensation and Development Policies Management Leadership Style Social Support
[Suárez Albánchez <i>et al.</i> , 2022]	Spain	Quantitative	Organizational Support Perceived	Organizational Commitment
[Vennila and Vivekanandan, 2017]	India	Quantitative	Work Exhaustion	-
[Vidya, 2023]	India	Quantitative	Emotional Dissonance Burnout Components (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization And Personal Accomplishment)	-
[Zaza <i>et al.</i> , 2022]	United States	Quantitative	Burnout	-



[Zentner, 2018]	United States	Quantitative	Job Performance	-
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#### 4.2. Key constructs on turnover intention among IT professionals

Job satisfaction was identified in 14 studies, making it the most cited internal factor influencing turnover intention. Employees with higher satisfaction levels are less likely to leave, reinforcing findings from [Pereira *et al.*, 2024] and [Dhakal *et al.*, 2024]. This construct can be understood as the fulfillment of work demands and has a significant impact on employees' well-being in the workplace [Dhamija *et al.*, 2019] [Xavier *et al.*, 2024]. It represents how much an individual experiences pleasures in the organizational context [Ramalho Luz *et al.*, 2018]. In addition, job satisfaction is also known to be a predictor of turnover intention [Grawitch *et al.*, 2007] where the higher the levels of job satisfaction the lower the intention to leave [Xavier *et al.*, 2024].

Organizational commitment appeared in 7 studies as the most frequent external factor. It stands out as the factor that reflects the extent to which an employee aligns with the organization's goals and values and is willing to put in effort to contribute to its success [Singh, 2024]. Additionally, [Mahindru *et al.*, 2023] reinforce that employees with higher organizational commitment exhibit lower turnover intention [Biswas and Varma, 2012; Gupta and Bhatia, 2023; Ramaprasad *et al.*, 2020] as noted by [Suárez-Albanchez *et al.*, 2022].

Burnout was highlighted in some studies as a significant internal factor, leading to decreased productivity and higher attrition rates, aligning with the work of [Trinkenreich *et al.*, 2024], which states that the few studies investigating its consequences provide evidence that burnout can lead to an increase in staff turnover intention. Moreover, according to [Ajayi and Udeh, 2024], the detrimental effect of burnout on productivity is well-documented, with several studies linking it to decreased work performance, increased absenteeism, and a higher turnover rate.

#### 4.3 Discussion and Implications

The findings confirm that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are critical in understanding turnover intention. In this sense, when these factors are low, employees are more likely to seek opportunities elsewhere, increasing turnover rates. The geographic distribution highlights the growing importance of emerging IT markets in turnover research. Additionally, the dominance of quantitative surveys suggests a need for more diverse methodological approaches, including qualitative and longitudinal studies.

To mitigate turnover intention, IT organizations should focus on enhancing job satisfaction through career development and well-being initiatives; strengthening organizational commitment by fostering engagement and leadership support; and addressing burnout with flexible work policies and mental health support. These insights might contribute to HR strategies aimed at improving talent retention and organizational stability in the IT sector.

## 5. Conclusions

This in-depth review analyzed 41 studies on knowledge workers' turnover, examining the internal and external factors influencing turnover intention. Searches were conducted in IEEE Xplore, ScienceDirect, ACM Digital, and Google Scholar (2015–2024), identifying 20,252 papers. After applying PRISMA-based inclusion and exclusion criteria, 41 studies were selected and categorized based on key turnover determinants.

Findings revealed that job satisfaction was the most frequently cited internal factor, while organizational commitment was the most prominent external factor. Additionally, burnout emerged as a significant internal driver of turnover intention among IT professionals. Thus, understanding these influences supports the development of talent retention strategies, mitigating productivity losses, skill gaps, and high rehiring costs.

This study has limitations. Many relevant studies were not freely accessible, and the scope was restricted to four databases, which, while significant, may not cover all pertinent research. Expanding the database scope could enhance future findings. Future research should also investigate the antecedents of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and burnout, as well as explore qualitative approaches to capture deeper insights into employee motivations and decision-making processes that quantitative methods may overlook. Moreover, as another future research direction, longitudinal research could explore the evolution of turnover intention over time, demonstrating on causal dynamics and long-term predictors.

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