

## Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment and Motivation between Perceived Investment in Employee Development and Turnover Intentions

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### **Abstract**

*This paper is aimed at examining the direct impact of Perceived Investment in employee development (PIED) on work related attitudes like organizational commitment (COMM) and motivation (MOTI) and how these attitudes shape employee turnover intentions (TOI). Information Technology (IT) sector was selected for investigation and 424 members of different call centers and software houses registered with Pakistan software export board (PSEB) provided the data. It was a cross sectional research and survey method was used to collect data. The results were drawn by using Structure equation modeling. It was concluded that PIED, COMM and MOTI has a significant and negative impact on TOI. Further, PIED has a significant and positive impact on COMM and MOTI. The result of mediation analysis showed that COMM significantly mediated the relationship between PIED and TOI however MOTI partially mediates the relationship between PIED and TOI.*

### **Introduction**

In the current global scenario competition is so forceful, not only in terms of products and services but also for hiring and retaining efficient employees. It makes it imperative for the organizations not only to find ways how to retain their employees but also to keep them happy. Human resource development is focusing more and more on employees; it has two-fold reason, Firstly, to improve the productivity of the employee to make the organization more successful in achieving its objectives, other reason may be that employees now prefer to work with the organizations, which are giving priority to the development of their employees. Thus organizations which want to retain employees and avoid the problem of high turnover are stressing the need for developing employees.

Recently many researchers have explored the effect of human resource practices on firm's outcomes (Mostafa & Gould-Williams, 2014; Albrecht et al. 2015; Meyer & Smith, 2000; Bratton & Gold, 2001; Paul & Anantharaman, 2003; Huselid 1995; Wagner, 1994). Gold (2003), determine training and development as a way to transfer continuous flow of knowledge across all the employees and also reducing their intentions to leave the organization. Bushardt et al. (1994) also advocated the positive outcomes of this human resource practice as improved job satisfaction and performance.

Research studies demonstrate that high commitment towards employee development shaped employee attitude and behaviour that ultimately resulted in organizational outcomes positively (Whitener, 2001). Employee development programs specifically, perceived investments in employee developments (PIED) is a key contributor in achieving the organisational outcomes through developing and maintaining the knowledge, abilities and skills of employees (Lee & Bruvold, 2003). PIED creates believe among employee that organization care their employability and value their contributions. PIED develop motivation among employees to work hard and positively contributes in organizational effectiveness (Wood & de Menezes, 1998).

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Existing Literature on employee development acknowledged two perspectives of perceived investment in employee development. First is originated from human capital theory which examined the association of training & development with employee turnover intentions. It is proposed that investments in employees' development may contribute in employee knowledge and skills which enhance the market value and employability of employees which in turn may induce turnover. Particularly organizational investments in training their employees for general skills are of greater interest because these investments also increase employee productivity (Becker, 1962). For this reason, human capital theory developed this assumption that organizations will not make investments in training their employees. However some researchers showed that when employees participate in general trainings, organizations may pay the training cost (Benson et al. 2004). The second point of view contradicts from the first one and put forward that investment in employee developments program may reduce the turnover intentions of employees (Benson et al. 2004; Sieben, 2007).

Supporting social exchange perspective, Lee and Bruvold (2003) initiate the concept of PIED and reported that perceptions of employees for organizational efforts regarding development of employees have significant and positive relationship with work attitudes. Kuvaas and Dysvik (2009) extended this same vein and confirmed that PIED is positively associated with organizational citizenship behaviors and task performance. They also found a mediating effect of social exchange, intrinsic motivation between PIED and behavioral outcomes. These researches elaborate the logic behind the relationship through which organizations provide services and benefits to employee and in exchange employee shows favorable attitudes and positive work outcomes, which again supports social exchange theory (Blau, 1964).

Summing up above discussion, literature acknowledges certain openings for further research in literature of under discussion variables (PIED, organizational commitment, motivation and turnover intentions). These variables and their relationships have been discussed by many researchers but the existing literature is less explored in context of PIED specifically. There is also a little support of empirical evidences confirming relationship of PIED, job related attitudes (organizational commitment, motivation) and employee's behavioral outcomes (TOI). Direction of relationships is ambiguous as well. Though, the relationships of these variables have been supported by numerous researches in isolation, but there is no comprehensive model examining these relationships as a whole. So, this research was an effort for exploring the concept of employee development. In social exchange theory's context, this was also an attempt to devise a comprehensive model for explaining the contributions of PIED in development of employee job related attitudes (organizational commitment, motivation) and their behavioral outcome (TOI).

## **Literature Review**

Evaluation by employees regarding their relationship with their organizations is one of the critical challenges for researchers. Perceived organizational support (POS) is basically the employee beliefs about the organizational care for the employee well-being and acknowledgment of their contributions (Tuck, 2014). POS is operationalized as an exchange between organization and employee (Saks, 2006), which may develop an urge in employees to reciprocate for instance organizational commitment (Chiang et al. 2011); employee motivation (Mitchell, et al. 2012); and turnover intentions (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012).

A number of researches explored the concept of POS, however PIED is relatively less explored concept. PIED is basically, developing employees' assessment that organization is committed to help them in obtaining new knowledge, skills and abilities which in turn may increase

their employability and potential to grow in their careers (Wayne et al., 1997). Consequently, employees are induced to put more efforts in meeting the organizational objectives if they feel more organizational commitment towards their growth. Literature acknowledges PIED as a specialized form of POS (Tuck, 2014).

Literature has supported the relationship that if organizations create a positive development oriented climate for their employees, their intentions towards turnover reduces (Ahmed, Rasheed, & Jehanzeb, 2012). Those people who get most of the support from their work places are more committed and less likely to leave their work place as compared to others (Perryer, et al., 2010). Rahman & Nas (2013) indicated that perceptions of employees regarding their development are used to predict turnover intentions of the workforce. Wayne, Shore, & Liden (1997) are also of the support to this view point and found same when they investigate about the antecedents and outcomes of Perceived organization Support (POS).

Scholars also highlighted organizations investment in training and development of employees as a significant predictor of organizational commitment (Ghina, 2012). Sahinidis & Bouris (2008) found perceptions of effectiveness of training and development programs and commitment as significantly correlated with each other. Furthermore, on-the-job training which was provided to employees in order to develop them was positively related with organizational commitment (Benson, 2006).

Lee and Bruvold (2003) conducted a study in context of social exchange theory. They found that PIED has a positive relationship with affective commitment but has no relationship with continuance commitment. Yousaf, Abbas, & Satti (2013) found an evidence in Pakistani context that PIED has a positive impact upon attitudinal outcomes of employees like affective commitment and their effective work performance.

Organizational commitment of employees had strong relationship with their desire and intent to remain with their organizations (Steers, 1977). Employee commitment is considered as one of those some talent retention and attraction strategies for maintaining and sustaining the talented employees with organizations. Jenkins and Thomlinson (1992) showed through their research that affective commitment was associated inversely with turnover intentions, whereas, continuance commitment showed a weak, insignificant and negative relation with turnover intentions. Kumar and Eng (2012) researched about determining a relation between perceptions of organizational commitment and the turnover intentions and found that organizations face difficulty in retaining those employees whose commitment with organization is reduced. Thus, higher the organizational commitment, lower will be the turnover intentions.

The employee perception regarding investments made by an organization for training and development programs is an indication for the motivation of the employee. Sahinidis & Bouris (2008) indicated that there is a significant correlation between the employee perceived training effectiveness and motivation of employees. Organizational support to the employees leads toward the intrinsic and identified motivation (Mitchell, et al., 2012). Furthermore, Shahzad, Waheed, & Khan (2012) conducted a study on employees working at different position in private sector banks of Pakistan and the results indicate that employees in the studied banks observe high levels of investment in employee development as well as, it was verified that respondents experience high levels of intrinsic motivation there.

Motivation is one of the significant factors to reduce the turnover intentions. Sajjad, Ghazanfar and Ramzan (2013) using the employees as of telecom sector of Pakistan reported that motivation is a key predictors of decreasing employee's intention to quit in Telecom sector of Pakistan. Similarly, Olusegun (2012) found statistically significant relationship between

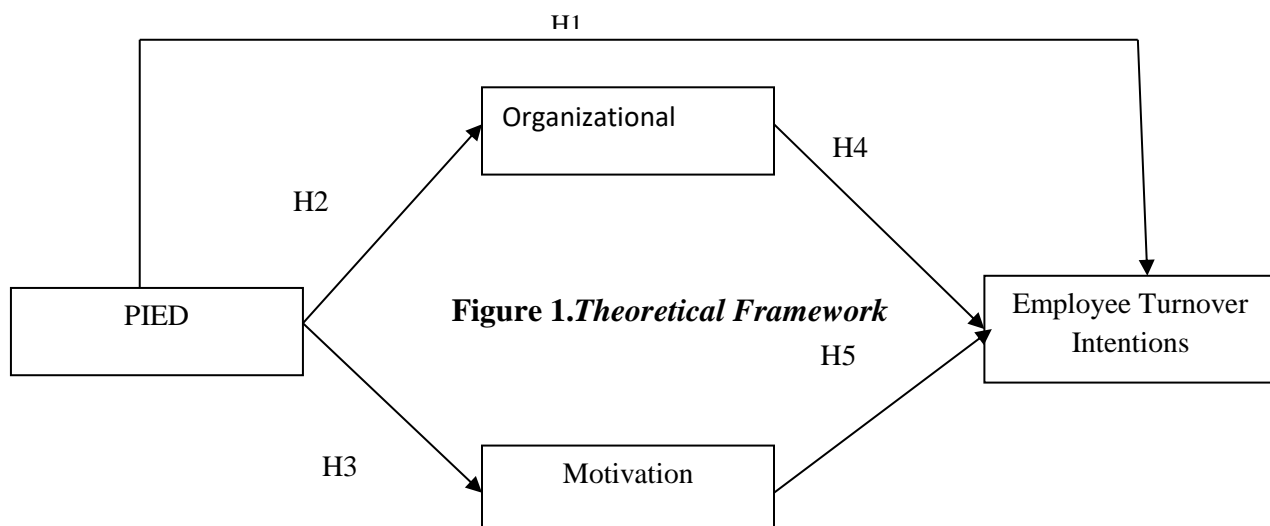
employee's work motivation and turnover intention in public universities. Dysvik & Kuvaas (2010) found intrinsic motivation as a strongest predictor of turnover intention among employees.

Support for training and development has strong and positive association with organizational commitment but significant negative association with turnover intentions. If employee perceive that their job contributes to their personal development and learning; it may contribute to develop favorable commitment to their companies, and in-turn, impacted their decision to continue their employment with these companies (Lozano, 2012). Cheng & Waldenberger, (2013) reveal that meeting expectations of Chinese workers regarding training and turnover intentions is mediated by affective and continuance component of organizational commitment.

Depending upon social exchange theory Lee and Bruvold (2003) found that relationship between PIED and turnover intentions has been fully mediated by affective commitment. Pare & Tremblay (2007) provide an indication that affective and continuance commitment were found as partially mediating the effects of HR practices such as competency development on the turnover intentions of highly skilled professionals performing a wide variety of IT jobs. Islam, et al. (2013) validated the results of previous research and found that affective and normative commitment of Malaysian bankers play a significant mediating role between employee's perceptions of organizational support and their intent to leave. Similarly, Tumwesigye (2010) determined organisational commitment as a significant mediator between support provided to employees and their intent to leave.

Dysvik and Kuvaas (2008) conducted a research on trainees from a wide range of service organizations in Norway and found that intrinsic motivation of these trainees partially mediated the association of perceptions of employees regarding training opportunities provided by the organization to their turnover intentions.

### Theoretical Framework



## Methodology

This study was a cross sectional study. The Survey method was used as a technique of data collection. A well structured questionnaire was used for data collection. In this research, the employees of Information Technology (IT) Industry of Pakistan are the subject of investigation. Therefore, the units of analysis for this research were individuals of different call centers and software houses registered with Pakistan software export board (PSEB). The sample size was determined by using Yamane (1967) formula and employees were chosen from selected organizations through equal allocation method. Through an extensive review of literature constructs used by Lee and Bruvold (2003), Paswan et al (2005), Meyer and Allen, (1990) a questionnaire was developed to measure the Perceived investment in employee development, employee commitment, motivation and employee intent to leave. The questionnaire is divided into five parts.

## Results and Discussion

Reliability was tested and the computed Cronbach's alpha values for PIED was 0.790, COMM was 0.831, MOTI was 0.891 and TOI was 0.831. Values of all measures were above the acceptance level (0.70), so all the constructs were internally consistent (O'Leary-Kelly & Vokurka, 1998).

The Pearson correlation is used to determine the statistical relationship between two variables. Correlation statistics provided in Table 1 illustrated existence of significance between variables. It showed that PIED has positive significant relationship with COMM and MOTI while TOI has negative significant relation with these variables.

**Table 1.**  
*Correlations analysis of constructs*

	PIED	COMM	MOTI	TOI
PIED	1			
COM	.759**	1		
MOTI	.098*	.013	1	
TOI	-.654**	-.589**	-.305**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## Structural Model

After analyzing the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), structural model is developed to test the proposed relationships of theoretical model. Structural model was composed of the four variables (PIED, COMM, MOTI and TOI). According to the theoretical model of the study, PIED was specified as exogenous variable and remaining three variables (COMM, MOTI and TOI) were specified as endogenous variables.

## Structural Model Fit Indices

It was evident from the results structural model was a good fit and there were no glitches of misfits. No further elimination or add-ons of the paths was suggested. Values for five model fit indices were CMIN/DF = 3.801, GFI = 0.99, AGFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.99 and RMSEA = 0.081. Model fit estimates meet the threshold values and indicated the best fit for the final structural model.

**Table 2.**  
*Testing hypothesis*

Structural Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R	P
TOI←PIED	-.193	.097	1.993	.046
COMM← PIED	.795	.033	23.943	***
MOTI←PIED	.089	.044	2.016	.044
TOI←COMM	-.114	.043	-2.634	.008
TOI←MOTI	-.164	.042	-3.946	***

**Table 3.**  
*Mediation Analysis*

Structural Path	Direct		Indirect	Results
TOI←COMM← PIED	-0.193	<	-0.09063	Partial mediation
TOI←MOTI← PIED	-0.193	<	-0.0146	Partial mediation

## Discussion

For Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>, it is evident from the results that PIED has a significant and negative impact on TOI supporting H<sub>1</sub>. The results are consistent with the study of Ahmed, Rasheed, & Jehanzeb (2012) and Rahman & Nas (2013). Inverse relation of these variables proves that by investing on employee development, organizations can reduce this averse kind of intentions of employees.

For Hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>, it is evident from the results that PIED has a significant and positive impact on COMM which is supporting H<sub>2</sub>. The results are consistent with the study of Lee and Bruvold (2003) and Muhammad (2014). This represented that positive perceptions of employees regarding organisational investment on their development has positively enhanced their commitment towards organization.

For Hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>, it is evident from the results that PIED has a significant and positive impact on MOTI supporting H<sub>3</sub>. The results are consistent with the study of Riggle et al., (2009) and Mudor and Tooksoon (2011). This illustrates that employees level of motivation depends upon the way employees perceive about their organization's investment for their development.

For Hypothesis H<sub>4</sub>, it is evident from the results that COMM has a significant and negative impact on TOI supporting H<sub>4</sub>. The results are consistent with the study of Kumar and Eng (2012) and Kuean et al., (2010). It explains the phenomenon supporting the evidence that committed employees do not think about leaving the organization and employee who are less committed to their organization are more likely to plan about leaving the organization.

For Hypothesis H<sub>5</sub>, it is evident from the results that MOTI has a significant and negative impact on TOI supporting H<sub>5</sub>. The results are consistent with the study of Olusegun (2012) and Sajjad, Ghazanfar, & Ramzan (2013). This represents that Less motivated employees seriously think about swithing their organization. Employees are intended to leave when they are not finding motivation in their jobs. It provides guidance for managers that they should design work activities that creates enthusiasm among employees so that they don't even think about leaving the organization.



For Hypothesis H<sub>6</sub>, It was hypothesized that COMM significantly mediated the relationship between PIED and TOI. It was evident from the results that COMM partially mediates the relationship between PIED and TOI. The results study strengthen the view that was presented by Lee and Bruvold (2003) in a research on chinese workers that different aspects of commitment do mediate between PIED and TOI. Moreover, this research is also consistent with the study of Pare & Tremblay (2007) and Islam, et al. (2013) which proved different aspects of commitment as significant mediator between PIED and TOI in different industries like banking and IT. It implies that employees belonging to diverse cultures and different industries have quite similar results. So, the managers should focus on such kind of employee development which creates organizational commitment and it will result in low employee turnover. Further, in IT sector, brilliant minds can do miracles and their maintenance with organization is necessary.

For Hypothesis H<sub>7</sub>, It was hypothesized that MOTI significantly mediated the relationship between PIED and TOI. It was evident from the result that MOTI partially mediates the relationship between PIED and TOI. This implies that motivation has significant role to strengthen the relation of perceived investment in employee development and their intentions to leave the organization. This is consistent with the findings of Dysvik & Kuvaas (2008) that empirically proved this mediating relationship in Norwegian service organizations. It shows that employees who are motivated, whether intrinsically or extrinsically, play significant role in relation of PIED and TOI. It means that development of employees creates motivation among employees which further make them loyal and reduces their TOI. Employee turnover has been a serious issue in telecom sector of Pakistan due to no switching cost and high demand of IT professionals (Hussain & Asif, 2012). Henceforth, if an organization wants to retain their talents, they have to motivate them by providing opportunities to grow then they may have reduced turnover intentions.

### **Implications Limitations and Future Directions**

The findings of this research have certain implications for researchers and practitioners. Firstly researchers can use the relationships established in this research as a reference point and for establishing further dimensions of research. With the help of the relationships established through this research, the HR managers can draw a guideline for developing a human resource strategy in order to reduce turnover intentions of their employees.

By investing in employee developmental activities and training opportunities organization may be able to develop the positive perceptions of employees which in turn will create more job satisfaction among them, higher organizational commitment and enhanced level of motivation. By improving these job related attitudes organizations will be in a better position to retain employees. These highly developed, satisfied, committed and motivated employees will help organizations to gain and sustain competitive advantage.

Although profound care has been taken to make the study prudent and objective, but still there are some limitations which should be considered before generalizing the results of this study. First, cross sectional survey method was used for collection of individuals' responses. However perceptions, attitudes and behaviors are dynamic. Thus to get more insight regarding the concept of PIED, work related attitudes (COMM and MOTI) and their outcomes (TOI) longitudinal study may be helpful. Second, this study relied on self-reported information of respondents that may affect the generalizability of current findings of causal relationship. Third, in this research intentions are measured instead of actual behaviors, intentions are considered as proximal predictors of actual behavior (Chau et al., 2009). Assessment of actual behaviors offers more accurate results. For instance, future researchers can consider actual turnover behavior along with

turnover intentions for further exploration of this phenomenon. Finally, the population defined in this research has been restricted to only IT industry, so further research in other industries with diverse demographic features can increase the generalizability of the current study results. Fifth, it is acknowledged that there are some other variables that could contribute in his model. For example, job burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001); Performance–reward expectancy (Eisenberger et al., 1990); Job involvement (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011); and withdrawal activities like Tardiness; Job search behavior; Absenteeism (Kurtessis et al. 2015).

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