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The Intrinsic Drivers of Employee Retention: Reassessment of Organizational Justice Theory in a Resource Constrained Context

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Abstract

This study challenges the assumption that distributive justice remains a dominant driver of employee retention in resource-constrained contexts. Drawing on Organizational Justice Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Two-Factor Theory, the research examines how job satisfaction, work–life balance, distributive justice, and perceived job quality influence employees' intention to stay within a private sector healthcare environment. The study investigates whether distributive fairness still remains a dominant driver of retention in an economically constrained environment. Using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) on survey data from 177 employees across multiple settings, results indicate that job satisfaction and work–life balance significantly predict intention to stay, whereas distributive justice and perceived job quality do not. The findings suggest that intrinsic motivational factors tend to supersede distributive fairness considerations in a limited resourced context, thereby offering boundary conditions for justice-based retention frameworks. Its implications for contextualized HRM theory and retention strategy are further discussed.

1.0 Introduction

Employee retention remains a central concern in human resource management for both academics and practitioners, particularly within private sector institutions that operate under financial constraints (Nuhu & Tabiu, 2025; Siddiqi et al., 2025). The healthcare sector faces acute retention challenges, as turnover intentions among clinical and administrative staff continue to threaten delivery of service and stability within institutions (Ajaiyeoba & Aplin-Houtz, 2025; Poeira & Nunes, 2025; Siddiqi et al., 2025). Although justice-based models have traditionally emphasized distributive fairness as a core predictor of retention (Gomes et al., 2025; Kim, 2025), emerging evidence suggests that intrinsic motivational mechanisms may exert stronger influence in certain contexts, without generalizability (Mosquera & Branco, 2025; Rabiul et al., 2025).

Recent studies have increasingly questioned the universality of justice-based retention expectations. Sankar et al. (2025), examining private sector power generation employees in India, assert that organizational justice influences job satisfaction through the mediated effect of organizational citizenship behavior, and they acknowledge that contextual factors are likely to moderate these relationships. Furthermore, Kim (2025) found that among Millennial and Gen Z employees, distributive, procedural, and interactional justice dimensions predicted job satisfaction, commitment, and empowerment differently, suggesting generational and contextual boundary conditions.

The limitation of resources in private healthcare environments presents a valuable context for reassessing justice-based assumptions. A resource-constrained private healthcare institution is defined here as a healthcare facility that operates with chronic shortage of financial, material, or human resources, limiting its ability to offer competitive extrinsic rewards such as salary increments, bonuses, or career development opportunities. In Nigeria, many private healthcare facilities face such constraints, contributing to high employee turnover. For example, anecdotal evidence from Bauchi metropolis indicates annual turnover rates among clinical and administrative staff exceeding30% in some private clinics, though systematic data remain scarce.

This study focuses on Bauchi metropolis because it represents a typical urban setting in northern Nigeria where private healthcare providers struggle with resource limitations, yet no prior empirical retention study has been conducted there.

Poeira and Nunes (2025) examine organizational ethics in healthcare and argue that perceptions of injustice, lack of recognition, or moral distress tend to enhance dissatisfaction and turnover intentions. However, they acknowledge that ethical climate is likely to interact with resource constraints to shape these relationships. In settings where distributive rewards

are usually limited, employees may anchor their stay decisions on intrinsic work features rather than extrinsic fairness perceptions (Nuhu & Tabiu, 2025; Siddiqi et al., 2025). This proposition aligns with recent calls for contextualized HRM scholarship that recognizes how economic constraints can alter the salience hierarchy of retention determinants (Gomes et al., 2025; Rabiul et al., 2025).

Meta-analytic evidence from the private sector reinforces this perspective. Abner and Hur (2024), synthesizing decades of research, identified that while justice perceptions influence turnover intentions, their effects are often mediated by job satisfaction and organizational commitment – factors that may themselves be shaped by resource availability. This suggests that justice-based retention models require refinement when applied to economically constrained settings.

Despite previous studies examining factors such as job satisfaction, organizational justice, and employee motivation, limited empirical research has holistically explored the combined influence of organizational and personal factors on employees' intention to stay within the Nigerian private healthcare sector. Most existing studies focus on either isolated predictors or are conducted in non-African contexts, limiting their applicability to Nigeria. Furthermore, prior frameworks (e.g., Gupta & Singh, 2018) emphasize only organizational factors while excluding personal and environmental variables. In Nigeria's private health sector, little is known about employee retention dynamics, particularly at the local government level. Given the strategic importance of healthcare services and the growing challenges related to turnover, there is an absolute need for empirical investigation that integrates organizational justice with personal determinants of employee intention to stay. Hence, this study examines the determinants of intention to stay among private healthcare employees in Bauchi metropolis.

This study contributes to contextualized HRM literature by reassessing the salience of distributive justice relative to intrinsic work factors in shaping intention to stay. By examining these relationships within a resource-constrained private healthcare institution, the study identifies boundary conditions under which justice-based assumptions may weaken. The research addresses three questions: (1) To what extent do job satisfaction, work–life balance, distributive justice, and perceived job quality predict intention to stay? (2) Does distributive fairness remain a dominant predictor in resource-limited contexts? (3) What are the practical implications for retention strategy in constrained environments?

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study argues that employee turnover remains a persistent challenge among health care facilities. And particularly the private healthcare sector is not safe from it, and also, high turnover disrupts service delivery, increases operational costs, and undermines organizational performance through the loss of experienced personnel. Further, the recruitment and training exercises for replacement of staffs usually require substantial financial and administrative resources, while frequent employee turnover continuous to erode institutional memory and service continuity.

Despite the fact that previous studies have examined factors such as job satisfaction, organizational justice, and employee motivation, limited empirical research have holistically explored the combined influence of organizational and personal factors on employee intention to stay within Nigerian private healthcare sector. Most Existing studies often focus on either isolated predictors or are conducted in non-African contexts, limiting their applicability to the Nigeria context.

Furthermore, prior frameworks such as that of Gupta and Singh (2018) make emphasis only on organizational factors while excluding personal and environmental variables. In Nigeria's private health sector, empirical evidence represents significant contextual gap, as little is known about employee retention dynamics within the Nigeria's private healthcare sector, particularly at the local government level.

The strategic importance of healthcare services and taking into account the growing challenges related to turnover within the sector, there is an absolute need for an empirical investigation that integrates organizational justice with personal determinants of employee intention to stay. Hence, this study therefore seeks to address both conceptual and contextual gaps by examining the determinants of intention to stay among private healthcare employees in Bauchi metropolis.

1.2 Literature Review

Using theoretical triangulation, this scholarship integrates three theoretical perspectives to examine determinants of retention in resource-limited contexts: Organizational Justice Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Two-Factor Theory. This triangulated approach allows for assessment of whether distributive fairness functions more as a hygiene factor than a core motivational driver in resource-constrained settings (Gomes et al., 2025; Kim, 2025).

Recent research by Kuutila et al. (2025) employing PLS-SEM methodology has demonstrated that organizational justice most strongly predicts job embeddedness rather than directly affecting turnover intentions. This suggests that justice may operate through

embeddedness mechanisms, offering one theoretical pathway for understanding how contextual factors moderate justice-retention relationships.

As already understood, Organizational Justice Theory stresses that perceptions of fairness influence employee attitudes and behavioral intentions (Gomes et al., 2025; Sankar et al., 2025). Research has consistently demonstrated that employees who perceive fair treatment exhibit stronger organizational commitment and stay intentions (Kim, 2025). However, the assumptions of organizational justice theory need to be refined particularly in contexts where distributive resources are low and limited (Rabiul et al., 2025). Poeira and Nunes (2025) further extended this perception by connecting organizational justice to ethical climate, arguing that healthcare professionals' intention to stay decisions are shaped by the broader ethical environment within which justice perceptions are formed.

The Self-Determination Theory emphasizes that intrinsic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fundamental motivational drivers (Siddiqi et al., 2025). Based on this perspective, employees derive satisfaction and commitment from work characteristics that fulfill these needs, separate from extrinsic rewards (Mosquera & Branco, 2025). Thus, in resource-constrained settings, satisfying intrinsic needs may become the foundational retention mechanism when distributive rewards cannot be enhanced (Ajaiyeoba & Aplin-Houtz, 2025). Spiegel (2025) found among private sector executives that hope, efficacy, and resilience collectively explained 22.5% of variance in turnover intentions, suggesting that intrinsic psychological resources can buffer against resource constraints.

The Two-Factor Theory outlines the distinct features of intrinsic motivators (recognition, responsibility, achievement) from extrinsic hygiene factors (pay, working conditions, job security). Herzberg's theory further suggests that intrinsic work features exert stronger effects on long-term engagement, whereas hygiene factors primarily prevent dissatisfaction rather than generating positive and long-term commitment (Nuhu & Tabiu, 2025). This distinction is particularly relevant for understanding retention in settings where hygiene factors are inherently constrained. Anugrah (2025) demonstrated that psychological capital and work-life satisfaction significantly influence job satisfaction, which in turn mitigates turnover intentions, supporting the Two-Factor Theory distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic pathways.

1.2.1 Hypothesis Development

Job Satisfaction and Intention to Stay

Job satisfaction represents employees' overall affective and positive orientations toward their work (Rabiul et al., 2025). Meta-analytic evidence indicates that job satisfaction is one

of the strongest predictors of retention across work environments (Abner & Hur, 2024; Mosquera & Branco, 2025). A recent healthcare study reinforced this relationship: Siddiqi et al. (2025) found that job satisfaction mediates the effects of supervisor support on nurses' intentions to leave significantly. Similarly, Nuhu and Tabiu (2025) demonstrated a similar pattern among Nigerian health sector professionals. Kuutila et al. (2025) confirmed using PLS-SEM that job satisfaction and embeddedness are significantly negatively associated with turnover intentions. From a Self-Determination Theory perspective, satisfying work fulfills basic psychological needs, consequently generating positive affect that attaches employees to their organizations (Ajaiyeoba & Aplin-Houtz, 2025). Therefore:

H1: Job satisfaction positively predicts intention to stay.

Work-Life Balance and Intention to Stay

Work-life balance refers to employees' ability to effectively manage work responsibilities alongside personal and family commitments (Rabiul et al., 2025). In healthcare settings where schedules are demanding and emotional labor is inherent, work-life balance is of significance to management (Poeira & Nunes, 2025; Siddiqi et al., 2025). Recent research by Xiaoxin et al. (2025) demonstrated that work-life balance contributes to employee loyalty by reducing resource depletion and burnout. Similarly, Mosquera and Branco (2025) found that work-life balance support moderated turnover intentions in virtual teams. Drawing on Conservation of Resources theory, employees seek to protect personal resources when work demands threaten work-life balance, thus increasing turnover intention as a resource preservation strategy (Siddiqi et al., 2025). Anugrah (2025) further demonstrated that through its effects on psychological capital and job satisfaction, work-life balance significantly influences turnover intentions.

H2: Work-life balance positively predicts intention to stay.

Distributive Justice and Intention to Stay

Distributive justice concerns employees' perceptions of fairness in reward allocation and resources (Gomes et al., 2025). Organizational Justice Theory maintains that unfair distribution is likely to trigger negative emotional responses and withdrawal behaviors (Poeira & Nunes, 2025; Sankar et al., 2025). Kim (2025) revealed that distributive justice is a predictor of job satisfaction and commitment among Millennial and Gen Z employees. Gomes et al. (2025) found that distributive justice influences work engagement across several occupational settings. However, these studies examined contexts with functional reward systems. In resource-constrained settings, fairness perceptions alone may exert weaker effects on retention (Nuhu & Tabiu, 2025).

Kuutila et al. (2025) provide a mechanism to understand this boundary condition by demonstrating that organizational justice strongly predicts job embeddedness rather than directly affecting turnover intentions. When embeddedness opportunities are limited by resource constraints, justice effects are likely to attenuate. Furthermore, drawing on Two-Factor Theory, distributive justice is likely to function primarily as a hygiene factor. Its absence generates dissatisfaction, but its presence may not necessarily generate positive commitment especially when intrinsic motivators are absent (Rabiul et al., 2025).

H3: Distributive justice positively intention to stay.

Perceived Job Quality and Intention to Stay

Perceived job quality is described as employees' assessments of work characteristics such as task significance, skill utilization, and autonomy (Ajaiyeoba & Aplin-Houtz, 2025). Research by Xiaoxin et al. (2025) revealed that perceived job quality influences employee loyalty by enhancing work engagement. Rabiul et al. (2025) posited that commitment to quality service mediated the relationship between HR practices and turnover intentions. From a Self-Determination Theory perspective, high-quality jobs satisfy needs for competence and autonomy, consequently fostering intrinsic motivation that links employees to their jobs (Siddiqi et al., 2025). However, in private healthcare contexts characterized by bureaucratic and resource constraints, perceived job quality is likely to be depressed, potentially attenuating its relationship with retention (Nuhu & Tabiu, 2025). Therefore, we examine:

H4: Perceived job quality positively predicts intention to stay.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Study Setting and Population

The study was conducted in Bauchi metropolis, Bauchi State, Nigeria. Bauchi was selected because it is a urban area with a growing number of private healthcare facilities operating under significant resource constraints (e.g., irregular staff salaries, limited medical supplies, high patient-to-staff ratios). No prior retention study has been conducted in this specific context, making it suitable for testing boundary conditions of justice-based theories. The target population comprised all clinical (nurses, laboratory technicians, community health officers) and administrative staff working in registered private healthcare institutions within Bauchi metropolis. The exact population size was estimated at approximately 350 employees across major private healthcare facilities, based on preliminary facility surveys.

1.3.2 Sample and Data Collection

Using a stratified random sampling technique (strata: clinical vs. administrative staff), a sample of 190 employees was drawn. The sample size was determined using GPower

analysis for multiple linear regression (four predictors; medium effect size $f^2 = 0.15$; $\alpha = 0.05$; power = 0.80), which recommended a minimum of 129 respondents. The 10-times rule for PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2019) also supported the sample (10 × 4 predictors = 100). To account for non-response, 190 questionnaires were distributed. Structured questionnaires were administered during regular working hours with assurances of confidentiality and voluntary participation. A total of 177 usable questionnaires were returned, representing a 93.2% response rate. This sample size is adequate for PLS-SEM analysis with a complex model of four predictors. Post-hoc power analysis using GPower indicated sufficient statistical power (>0.80) to detect medium effect sizes at $\alpha = 0.05$.

1.3.3 Measures

All constructs were measured using established scales adapted to the healthcare context (Rabiul et al., 2025). Items were rated on five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Intention to Stay (IS): Five items adapted from established turnover intention scales (Mosquera & Branco, 2025). Sample item: "I plan to continue working at this organization for the foreseeable future." After analysis, four items (IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5) were retained.

· Job Satisfaction (JS): Four items capturing affective evaluations of work (Siddiqi et al., 2025). Sample item: "Overall, I am satisfied with my job."

· Work–Life Balance (WLB): Four items assessing the ability to manage professional and personal responsibilities (Rabiul et al., 2025). After analysis, two items (WLB3, WLB4) were retained.

· Distributive Justice (DJ): Five items measuring fairness perceptions regarding reward allocation (Gomes et al., 2025). After analysis, three items (DJ3, DJ4, DJ5) were retained.

· Perceived Job Quality (PJQ): Three items assessing task significance, skill utilization, and meaningfulness (Ajaiyeoba & Aplin-Houtz, 2025). Two items (PJQ2, PJQ3) were retained.

1.3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4.0. Following recent recommendations (Hair et al., 2019), the measurement model was assessed for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (using both Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria). The structural model was evaluated through path coefficients, effect sizes (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and model fit (SRMR). Statistical significance was determined using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to generate 95% confidence intervals. Common method bias was assessed using Harman's single-factor test and full collinearity VIF.

1.4 Findings

1.4.1 Participant Demographics

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable Category	n	%
Gender Male	63	35.6
Female	106	59.9
Age less than or equal to 25 years	61	34.5
Age more than or equal to 26 years	116	65.5
Marital Status Single	96	54.2
Married	72	40.7

Results indicate that the majority of respondents were female (59.9%), while those aged 26 years or above comprised 65.5%. Slightly more than half of the participants were single (54.2%). These demographic data align with recent studies in similar contexts (Nuhu & Tabiu, 2025; Poeira & Nunes, 2025; Siddiqi et al., 2025).

1.4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

Table 2. Outer Loadings, Reliability, and Convergent Validity

Construct Items	Loadings	α ρ_{	c}	AVE
Distributive Justice (DJ) DJ3	0.726	0.751	0.829	0.619
DJ4 0.857				
DJ5 0.773				
Intention to Stay (IS) IS1	0.852	0.799	0.871	0.632
IS2 0.870				
IS4 0.808				
IS5 0.625				
Job Satisfaction (JS) JS1	0.789	0.826	0.884	0.656
JS2 0.805				
JS3 0.817				
JS4 0.827				
Perceived Job Quality (PJQ) PJQ2	0.790	0.859	0.795	0.660
PJQ3 0.834				
Work-Life Balance (WLB) WLB3	0.606	0.719	0.730	0.583
WLB4 0.894				

Note: α = Cronbach's alpha; ρ_c = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

All composite reliability values exceeded the recommended 0.70 threshold (Hair et al., 2019). AVE values were above 0.50 for all constructs except WLB (0.583 > 0.50

acceptable). Perceived job quality showed good reliability (α = 0.859) despite using only two items.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Construct	IS	JS	WLB	DJ	PJQ
IS	**.802**				
JS	.593	**.850**			
WLB	.312	.401	**.815**		
DJ	.128	.255	.210	**.792**	
PJQ	.084	.175	.143	.301	**.704**

Note: Diagonal values (bold) represent square roots of AVE; off-diagonal values represent inter-construct correlations. IS = Intention to Stay; JS = Job Satisfaction; WLB = Work–Life Balance; DJ = Distributive Justice; PJQ = Perceived Job Quality.The square roots of AVE for each construct exceeded their highest correlation with any other construct, supporting discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Further, all HTMT values were within the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015), which provided additional evidence of discriminant validity. These results perfectly align with PLS-SEM recent studies by reporting similar discriminant validity patterns (Kuutila et al., 2025; Mosquera & Branco, 2025; Siddiqi et al., 2025).

Table 4. Discriminant Validity – HTMT Ratio

Construct Pair	HTMT
IS ↔ DJ	0.331
JS ↔ DJ	0.408
JS ↔ IS	0.865
PJQ ↔ DJ	0.456
PJQ ↔ IS	0.581
PJQ ↔ JS	0.799
WLB ↔ DJ	0.453
WLB ↔ IS	0.423
WLB ↔ JS	0.618
WLB ↔ PJQ	0.799

All HTMT values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2016), providing additional evidence of discriminant validity.

1.4.3 Common Method Bias

Harman's single-factor test revealed that the first factor accounted for 32.4% of the variance, below the 50% threshold, suggesting that common method bias is not a significant concern (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, full collinearity assessment showed that all inner

model VIF values (range = 1.13–1.85) were below the conservative threshold of 3.3 (Kock, 2015), indicating absence of common method bias.

1.4.4 Model Fit

The hypothesized model demonstrated acceptable fit with SRMR = 0.109 (saturated model). While this exceeds the strict threshold of 0.08, values up to 0.12 are considered acceptable in PLS-SEM, particularly in complex or exploratory models (Henseler et al., 2016; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The NFI was 0.603.

1.4.5 Structural Model Results

Table 5. Path Coefficients, Significance, Effect Sizes, and Predictive Relevance

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	f^2	95% CI	Support
H1	JS → IS	.593	8.152	<.001	.412	[.482, .704]	Yes
H2	WLB → IS	.199	3.219	.001	.072	[.087, .311]	Yes
H3	DJ → IS	.011	0.181	.428	.003	[-.156, .089]	No
H4	PJQ → IS	.006	0.078	.469	.002	[-.143, .078]	No

Table 6. Inner Model VIF Values

Predictor	VIF
DJ → IS	1.13
JS → IS	1.85
PJQ → IS	1.36
WLB → IS	1.46

All VIF values were below 3.3, indicating no multicollinearity concerns.

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Endogenous construct	R^2	R^2	adjusted Q^2
Intention to Stay (IS)	0.533	0.522	0.341

The results indicate that job satisfaction significantly predicts intention to stay (β = 0.593, p < .001), supporting H1. Work-life balance also shows a significantly positive relationship with intention to stay (β = 0.199, p = .001), supporting H2. Contrary to H3, distributive justice did not exhibit a positive relationship with intention to stay (β = 0.011, p = .428). Similarly, perceived job quality did not show a significant effect (β = 0.006, p = .469), failing to support H4.

The model explained 53.3% of the variance in intention to stay (R^2 = 0.533), indicating adequate explanatory power. The Stone-Geisser Q^2 value of 0.341 (obtained through

blindfolding with omission distance 7) exceeds zero substantially, demonstrating moderate to strong predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2019).

1.5 Discussion

This study examined the influence of job satisfaction, work-life balance, distributive justice, and perceived job quality on employees' intention to stay in a resource-constrained private healthcare context. The findings demonstrate that job satisfaction and work-life balance significantly predict intention to stay, whereas distributive justice and perceived job quality do not. Collectively, these variables explained substantial variance in retention intentions ($R^2 = 0.533$), and the model's predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.341$) confirms its utility for HR interventions in similar contexts.

1.5.1 Theoretical Contributions

The dominance of job satisfaction aligns with Two-Factor Theory, which asserts that intrinsic motivators have stronger influence on long-term engagement than hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1966), particularly in economically constrained environments where distributive rewards are limited. Under such circumstances, intrinsic satisfaction becomes the primary retention anchor. This finding extends recent research by Sankar et al. (2025) and Gomes et al. (2025), demonstrating that although organizational justice influences workplace attitudes, its distributive dimension loses predictive salience when extrinsic rewards cannot be meaningfully differentiated.

The significant effect of work-life balance complements findings from Siddiqi et al. (2025) and Xiaoxin et al. (2025), who identified work-life balance as a critical preservation mechanism in demanding healthcare environments. Drawing on Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), employees in resource-constrained settings prioritize work-life balance as a means of protecting personal resources when organizational rewards are insufficient. This interpretation conforms with Mosquera and Branco's (2025) finding that work-life balance support moderates turnover intentions by reducing resource depletion.

The non-significance of distributive justice offers a boundary condition for Organizational Justice Theory. Whereas Kim (2025) and Gomes et al. (2025) demonstrated justice-retention relationships in relatively functional contexts, the present findings suggest that distributive fairness may function primarily as a hygiene factor – its absence generates dissatisfaction, but its presence does not necessarily generate positive commitment when intrinsic motivators are absent (Rabiul et al., 2025). Kuutila et al. (2025) provide a mechanism for this finding: organizational justice most strongly predicts job embeddedness rather than directly affecting turnover intentions. In resource-constrained settings where embeddedness

opportunities (career development, social integration, community ties) are limited, the indirect pathway from justice to retention through embeddedness may be attenuated. This refinement addresses recent calls for contextualized HRM scholarship that understands how economic constraints alter the salience hierarchy of retention determinants (Abner & Hur, 2024; Nuhu & Tabiu, 2025).

The non-significant result for perceived job quality, although contrary to predictions from Self-Determination Theory, may reflect the specific operationalization of job quality in this study or the bureaucratic characteristics of private healthcare employment (Ajaiyeoba & Aplin-Houtz, 2025). Poeira and Nunes (2025) note that organizational justice and ethical climate shape healthcare professionals' perceptions of job quality, suggesting that perceived job quality may be a construct shaped by other factors rather than an independent predictor. Future research should examine alternative job quality dimensions beyond autonomy.

1.5.2 Contribution to Contextualized HRM Theory

By demonstrating that economic constraints can fundamentally alter the retention determinants' salience hierarchy, this study advances contextualized HRM scholarship. The findings suggest that in resource-limited environments, justice-based retention models require refinement to account for the primacy of intrinsic motivational factors. This contribution aligns with current theoretical developments emphasizing the need to examine HRM phenomena within their institutional and economic contexts (Gomes et al., 2025; Poeira & Nunes, 2025; Rabiul et al., 2025).

The integration of Organizational Justice Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Two-Factor Theory provides a triangulated framework for understanding retention in constrained settings. The findings suggest that distributive justice may operate through different mechanisms when resources are limited, functioning as a necessary but insufficient condition for retention rather than a primary driver. This interpretation complements autonomy-based arguments within Self-Determination Theory and refines the assumptions of Organizational Justice Theory by suggesting that distributive justice may function as a boundary-conditioned factor rather than a universal driver.

1.5.3 Practical Implications

For human resource managers operating in resource-limited environments, retention strategies should prioritize enhancing intrinsic job satisfaction and supporting work-life balance policies rather than relying solely on distributive compensation adjustments. The large effect size associated with job satisfaction ($f^2 = 0.408$) indicates that interventions

targeting work meaningfulness, recognition, and achievement can yield substantial retention benefits even when financial rewards cannot be increased.

1.6 Conclusion

This study has advanced HRM theory by identifying contextual boundary conditions affecting justice-based retention assumptions. In an economically constrained private sector healthcare setting, intrinsic motivational factors – particularly job satisfaction and work-life balance – supersede distributive justice. The findings exhibit strong explanatory power (R^2 = 0.533) and predictive relevance (Q^2 = 0.341), suggesting practical utility for HR interventions. For scholars, the results refine Organizational Justice Theory by specifying conditions under which distributive justice assumptions weaken, offering integration with job embeddedness and psychological capital frameworks. For practitioners, the findings provide guidance for effective retention strategy when financial resources are inherently limited, emphasizing intrinsic satisfaction, work-life balance, and psychological capital development over compensation-focused interventions.

1.7 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

· Enhance intrinsic job satisfaction by

implementing job enrichment programs that increase task significance, skill variety, and autonomy. Provide regular feedback and recognition that affirms employees' contribution to patient care and organizational mission. Create opportunities for professional development and career progression despite resource limitations.

· Support work-life balance by developing flexible scheduling arrangements that accommodate employees' personal responsibilities. Implement supportive supervision practices that respect work-life boundaries. Consider creative solutions such as job sharing, compressed work weeks, and remote work options where clinically feasible.

· Strengthen meaningful work experiences by connecting daily tasks to organizational mission and patient outcomes. Foster collegial relationships that provide social support. Create mechanisms that recognize employee voice in decisions affecting their work. Cultivate an ethical workplace culture to enhance intrinsic satisfaction even when resources are constrained.

· Enhance psychological capital through low-cost training programs targeting hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Such interventions may be particularly valuable in resource-constrained contexts where financial incentives cannot be enhanced.

1.7.1 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference; longitudinal research is required to establish temporal relationships among study variables. Second, the single-source self-reported data may introduce common method bias, although diagnostic tests suggested this is not a significant concern. Third, the sample from one healthcare context limits generalizability to other settings or countries; future research should avoid single-institution samples.

Comparative studies examining resource-abundant versus resource-constrained contexts would provide a stronger test of the boundary conditions identified here. Additionally, future research should explore potential moderators such as professional status (clinical vs. administrative) and tenure. In line with emerging literature on job embeddedness and psychological capital, future studies should examine whether job embeddedness mediates the justice-retention relationship in resource-constrained contexts.

Methodologically, future studies should employ mixed-method designs combining survey data with interviews to understand the mechanisms underlying the primacy of intrinsic factors. Longitudinal designs tracking actual turnover behavior rather than intentions should also be considered.

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