

The Relationship Between Training and Employee Turnover Intentions in the Private Sector in Saudi Arabia.

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Abstract

The current study aims to examine the relationship between employee training and turnover intention within the private sector in Saudi Arabia. The study centers on two factors, namely "training," which is further categorized into "Training Benefits" and "Training Availability," serving as the independent variable, and "turnover intention" as the dependent variable. A cross-sectional study methodology was used to gather data from a sample of 120 private sector workers. The data collection was conducted via the administration of Qualtrics questionnaires, and the subsequent analysis was carried out using SPSS.

This study is essential in the Saudi private sector as it aims to provide insights into the possible influence of training programs on mitigating turnover intention. Investigating the perceived advantages and ease of access to training adds to the body of knowledge in human resource management. It enhances our comprehension of the elements that impact employee retention. The results of this study are anticipated to provide valuable guidance for businesses and policymakers in formulating efficacious approaches to tackle turnover issues and improve the stability of the workforce within the area.

Keywords- Training, Turnover intention, Private Sector, Saudi Arabia.

Introduction

Organizations face unprecedented challenges in today's rapidly evolving business landscape, characterized by technological advancements, regulatory changes, communication methods, and shifting social and environmental norms (Jehanzeb et al., 2013). Consequently, businesses increasingly recognize the pivotal role of human resources in achieving success and growth. Retaining a productive workforce has become paramount as employee turnover rates surge. To address this, businesses are implementing new initiatives and programs to retain their current staff for longer durations (Musbah et al., 2015; Imm, 2021).

Numerous studies have theorized a significant relationship between investments in human resources and their impact on employees' turnover intentions (Al-Shaibah et al., 2017; Martin et al., 2023; Sujiuto, 2023; Abdullah & Selvakkumar, 2023; Tyagi, 2023). Employee turnover has emerged as a critical concern, prompting increased attention from upper management and human resource specialists (Musbah et al., 2016; Al Suraihi, 2021). As Dasilveira et al. (2020) noted, effective human resource management is vital in enhancing employees' skills and knowledge for the organization's overall benefit.

Training is a fundamental component of human resource management and profoundly impacts productivity and job satisfaction. It enhances employees' competencies and professional capabilities by imparting new knowledge and skills (Ichsan, 2020). Satisfied employees are more likely to remain with their organizations, underscoring the importance of attentive management. Therefore, this research on the influence of training on turnover intention in the Saudi private

sector holds significant relevance for understanding the current labor market dynamics and developing effective strategies to reduce employee intentions to seek alternative employment.

Organizations may need to make substantial investments in training programs to mitigate turnover rates and bolster employee engagement. Employee training is essentially an acquisition process, where individuals acquire new abilities, knowledge, or skills to enhance job performance (Rodriguez and Walters, 2017). Ultimately, turnover intention reflects an individual's inclination to stay or leave their current organization (Al-Hammali et al., 2017; Salama et al., 2019; Lazzari et al., 2022). Given the unprecedented global challenges we face today, it is imperative that society continues to invest in scientific research to deepen our understanding and work toward practical solutions.

Literature Review

The relationship between training and employee turnover is a complex and multifaceted issue that has garnered significant attention in the field of organizational research. Several studies have explored this connection, producing varying results and highlighting the importance of considering different factors that can influence turnover intentions. Studies such as those by Malik et al. (2016) and Erthan and Sesen (2022) have delved into how employees perceive the level of training and growth opportunities offered by their employers and how this perception affects their inclination to stay with the company. As noted by Ismail (2016), inconsistent findings in this area suggest that there may be moderating factors at play. When faced with inconsistency in research outcomes, Baron and Kenny (1986) suggested that introducing moderators into the model could help explain the variance in results.

Interestingly, research by Sheng (2003), Salah and Habtoor (2017), and Salama et al. (2019) has indicated that employees who are content with their training opportunities might actually be more inclined to leave. This counterintuitive finding underscores the need for a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between training and turnover.

Conversely, studies such as the one by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in 2008 have shown that employees who receive more training are less likely to leave their jobs. This finding aligns with the idea that providing employees with development opportunities can increase job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions. Seeli's (2022) research further supports the positive impact of training on employee retention. Not only does training participation correlate with longer tenures within the organization, but it also emphasizes the importance of aligning training with employees' career goals.

Moreover, Rahman and Uddin (2022) and Mazzetti and Schaufeli (2022) emphasize that investing in employee training and skill development can lead to enhanced job performance, ultimately contributing to organizational success. This highlights the intrinsic link between employee development and organizational performance.

Recognizing employees' diverse learning styles is essential, as suggested by HRM (2022). Tailoring training programs to individual preferences, whether hands-on, visual, or kinesthetic, can enhance the effectiveness of these programs and contribute to employee satisfaction and retention.

Career growth and development opportunities, such as promotions and stretch assignments, also play a pivotal role in retaining employees, as proposed by Rehman et al. (2022). Additionally, fostering an encouraging and interactive workplace, as noted by Quadri et al. (2022), can further enhance employee retention.

While employers have a significant role to play in supporting employee development and career growth, Previtera (2022) highlights the importance of a collaborative approach. Employees should actively set their development goals, with employers providing the necessary resources and support to help them achieve these objectives.

A lack of promotional opportunities within an organization can contribute to employee turnover, as suggested by Lalin and Hasan (2021). However, training and development initiatives can counteract this by equipping employees with the skills needed to advance their careers within the same organization (Habtoor, 2015; Ischan, 2020).

Nonetheless, the relationship between training and turnover intentions is not straightforward, as various confounding factors can influence this association. Organizational commitment (Dalgic & Alkunduz, 2022), job satisfaction (Chavadi et al., 2022), and salary increases (Likoko & Barasa, 2022) are some of the variables known to mediate this relationship.

Furthermore, the study's specific context can also impact the relationship between training and turnover intentions. For instance, research by Johnson (2022) within a clothing retail organization revealed that training significantly positively impacted retention, especially among newer employees. Similarly, Erthan and Sesen (2022) found that the relationship between training and turnover intentions was stronger for employees with higher levels of job satisfaction in a healthcare organization. When examining this relationship, these findings underscore the need to consider the unique characteristics of different industries and organizational contexts.

Given the diversity of findings in existing research, it is imperative to investigate whether the same patterns hold true in the private sector in Saudi Arabia. A negative result in such a context could suggest the influence of region-specific factors, organizational practices, or cultural elements on turnover intentions. This underscores the importance of conducting localized research to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

In conclusion, the relationship between training and employee turnover intentions is intricate, influenced by various factors, and can yield diverse outcomes. While training is generally recognized as a valuable tool for enhancing employee retention, its impact is contingent on individual preferences, organizational practices, and contextual factors. Further research in specific regional and organizational contexts, such as the private sector in Saudi Arabia, can provide valuable insights for designing effective employee retention strategies tailored to the unique needs of diverse work environments.

Theoretical Framework

The Human Capital Investment Theory, introduced by Becker (1962), is a well-established framework for understanding how training impacts turnover intentions. It delves into the economic relationship between investments in human capital and overall growth. Human capital refers to individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities, which can drive productivity and income generation. As per Kenton et al. (2022) and Habtoor and Ali (2022), investing in education, training, and healthcare significantly enhances productivity and economic development. This leads to higher returns on investment (Lăzăroiu, Ionescu, Andronie, & Dijmărescu) within the realm of Human Capital Investment (Ross, 2021). As Fernando (2022) points out, ROI in human capital translates into increased income, particularly evident when investing in education.

Within this framework, the concept of "externalities" plays a crucial role. These are the secondary effects arising from individual investments in skills and knowledge that influence societal well-being. For example, enrolling in higher education can produce informed community members, promoting social cohesion (Salah and Habtoor, 2015; Bosi et al., 2021).

Different types of human capital investments include formal education, career-based training, and medical care, each with unique ROI and externalities (Habtoor et al., 2016; Motshwane, and Niekerk, 2022). Specifically, vocational training stands out for its high ROI and positive externalities, as it imparts industry-specific skills, enhancing productivity and civic engagement (Meulemann, and Walter, 2020; Habtoor and Alherbi, 2020).

On-the-job training is another valuable form of human capital investment, offering high ROI and positive externalities by enhancing employees' productivity and engagement (Habtoor, 2018; Ma et al., 2021). Research by Bartel (1995) and Dearden et al. (2006) underscores the correlation between training and productivity, with training being a better predictor than wages.

Becker (1962) distinguishes between general and specific training. General training, suitable for many firms, increases employability but may elevate turnover intentions. Conversely, specific training profoundly impacts output and does not necessarily make employees more attractive to other companies. Distinguishing between these types can be challenging (Grey et al., 2022), and research by Barrett and O'Connell (2001) highlights the productivity-enhancing potential of general education.

Given the limited contemporary research on various training forms, this thesis focuses on employer-provided training, transcending the general versus specific distinction. It investigates its impact on turnover intentions, recognizing that data on former employees might be challenging to obtain.

H 1: There is a positive direct effect between Training Benefits and Employee Turnover Intentions.

H 1a: There is a positive direct effect between Training Availability and Employee Turnover Intention.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional research design to gather data from approximately 120 workers, representing a diverse range of job roles, through an online Qualtrics survey in various private sector locations in Saudi Arabia. Missing responses were treated as "missing values." The research focused on two variables, Training and Turnover

Intention, which were assessed through specific questionnaire items. Training, the independent variable, was evaluated using two critical measures: Training Availability and Training Benefits. These measures were chosen for their significance in organizational training assessment, providing a comprehensive evaluation of training effectiveness (Ali, Alzoraiki, AL-Tahitah, Almaamari, & Al-shaibah, 2023; Ali, Yusoff, & Ali, 2019; Ateeq, Ebrahim, & Al-Ghatam, 2022).

Quantitative Research

Survey responses were exported from Qualtrics, processed in SPSS, and analyzed through statistical tests, aligning with prior studies on workplace discrimination's relationship with turnover intention (Johnson, 2022; Chavadi et al., 2022).

Research Sampling and Population

This study employed random sampling, as defined by Creswell (2014), to select 120 participants from a pool of 165 eligible private sector employees in Saudi Arabia. Invitations were sent via email, ensuring each had an equal chance of being selected, thus representing the population effectively.

Measures

Training Availability

Recent research by Gursoy et al. (2017) highlights the significance of training availability in fostering employee loyalty and appreciation. Providing access to diverse training opportunities, including online courses and seminars (Nguyen et al., 2019), ensures employees stay updated on industry trends. Organizations can further nurture workforce growth by offering training modules and sponsoring attendance at relevant events, leading to heightened motivation, job satisfaction, and retention rates (Zhang et al., 2020). This emphasis on skill development is vital for cultivating a thriving, achievement-driven organizational culture.

Training Benefits

Training has multifaceted benefits for individuals and organizations. It enhances knowledge, skills, and career prospects while fostering morale and job satisfaction. Additionally, it bolsters efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and performance for companies. Short-term effects encompass heightened motivation, improved job knowledge, and morale. Over the long run, it leads to increased productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Moreover, training contributes to reduced workplace injuries, illnesses, and employee turnover (Ellinger et al., 2018; Baltes et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2020; Liang et al., 2021).

Data Analysis

Regression analysis will assess associations between turnover intentions (dependent variable) and training (independent variable), including the two training factors (Training Accessibility and Training Benefits), testing Hypotheses 1, 1a, and 1b, and revealing their degree and direction (Ali & Habtoor, 2022; Habtoor & Ali, 2022).

Significance and Contribution of Research

Previous research on employee turnover and training has been conducted in the United States, Europe, and Asia (Raman and Uddin, 2022; Ramesh and Gelfand, 2010; Tymon et al., 2010). However, the issue of turnover intention and its determinants in the Saudi private sector remains understudied, with no definitive reasons established. This study's examination of training and turnover intention in a unique private sector model holds significant value, benefiting Saudi private sector management in shaping more effective retention policies. Policymakers can also use the findings to create labor-friendly policies, ultimately reducing employee turnover. Additionally, the research addresses critical challenges and directions for enhancing job satisfaction and reducing turnover intention in Saudi Arabia's workforce.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Table 4.2- Descriptive Statistics

Statistics

		GENDER	OF LEVEL	OF WORK	
		RESPONDENT	EDUCATION -	EXPERIENCE	AGE
N	Valid	120	120	120	120
	Missing	0	0	0	0

The output of *Table 4.2* shows the personal information of the 120 employees in Saudi, Arabia. No values were missing.

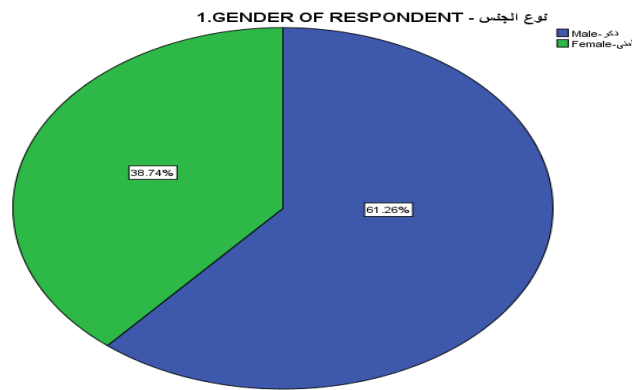
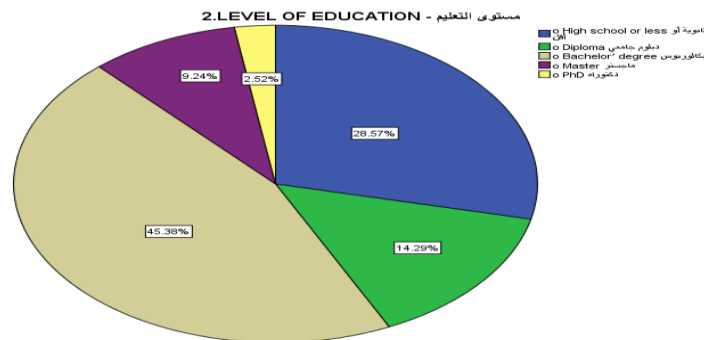


Figure 4.2.1 highlights the Gender of workers in Saudi Arabia. The majority of the respondents were Male(61.26%) while Women made up 38.74%.



The Output from *Figure 4.2.2* had a *Bachelors degree* as the educational qualification of majority of the Saudi Workers. Respondents with high school or less made up 28.57%.

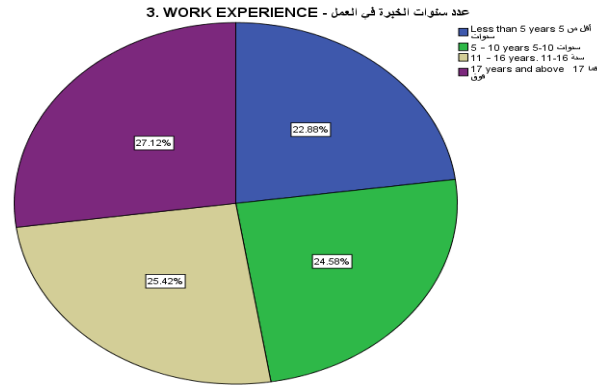


Figure 4.2.3 outlines that the *Work Experience* of all the workers in this study. The experience by year were close to each other. More experienced individuals were the most(27.12%). And the least experienced workers had the lowest percentage.

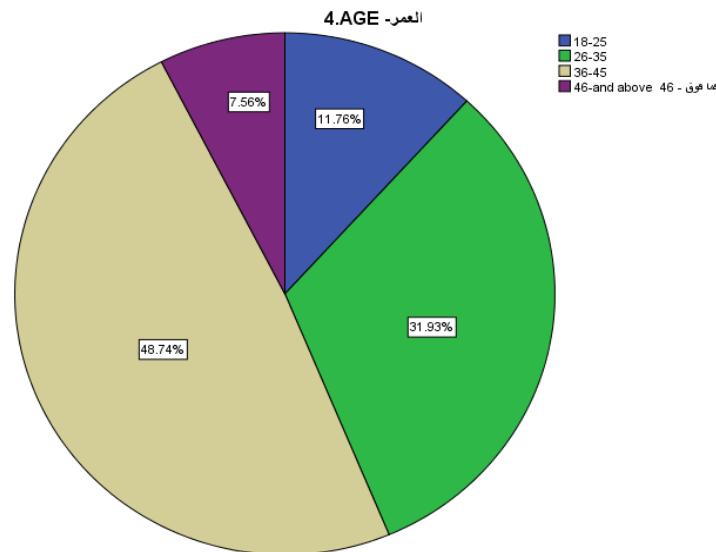


Figure 4.3 shows the *Age* output. The data reveals that 48.74% of Saudi workers in this study had an age of 36 -45 years. The oldest employees had the lowest percentage.(7.56%).

Variables were analyzed individually for simplicity. Linear Regression assessed Employee Training's impact on Turnover Intentions using correlation and coefficient tables

Response Rate

Out of the 165 survey links distributed to Saudi Arabian employees, 120 responses were collected and analyzed in SPSS after transferring the Qualtrics data. Calculating the response rate by dividing the actual responses (120) by the number of distributed links (165) results in a robust 72% response rate. This rate is considered sufficient and representative of private sector employees in Saudi Arabia, demonstrating the study's validity and generalizability.

Skewness and Kurtosis

Skewness is a statistical metric that quantifies the degree of symmetry or asymmetry of a given dataset's distribution (Hair et al, 2017). On the other hand, kurtosis is a measure that evaluates the extent to which a dataset is heavy-tailed or light-tailed in a normal distribution.

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Access	120	-.695	.222	.230	.440
Benefits	120	-1.292	.222	5.214	.440
Turnover Intention	120	-.270	.222	-.145	.440
Valid N (listwise)	120				

Note: Acceptable ranges for skewness and kurtosis depend on context but generally fall within -2 to +2 for skewness and -2 to +2 for kurtosis in most applications (Al-refaei, Ali, Ateeq, & Alzoraiki, 2023; Ali, 2022).

The Skewness ranges from -0.201 to 0.115 while the Kurtosis ranges from -1.203 to -0.841. According to values outlined by Hair et al (2017), the skewness values are near to 0 for all four variables, indicating a generally symmetrical distribution. Each variable's negative kurtosis value indicates a more spread-out and uniform distribution compared to the normal distribution. This means that a non-parametric method is suitable for the data (Spearman's Rho Correlation).

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency reliability of a scale or test, which indicates the degree to which the items in the scale measure the same underlying construct (Ali, Yusoffii, & Aliiii, 2019). The normal value of Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater reliability (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011).

Construct	α
Training Access	0.798
Training Benefits	0.786
Turnover Intention	0.795

*Cronbach's alpha: average measure of internal consistency and item reliability and preferred when EFA is used for factor extraction. <0.7 accepted. * (Al Balushi, Ali, & Alzoraiki, 2022)*

For this research, the Cronbach's alpha value of Training Access is .798, Training Benefits .786 and Turnover Intention .792 all of which are good reliability values because they are closer to 1.

Correlation Matrix

According to Creswell (2013), a correlation matrix is a valuable statistical instrument for examining the association among variables in a given dataset. Identifying patterns and trends among variables is a frequently employed technique in research. The correlation matrix exhibits the correlation coefficients among all conceivable pairs of variables within the dataset, spanning from -1 to 1. Furthermore, the matrix that is produced can offer valuable insights into the nature and magnitude of the associations between variables, enabling researchers to pinpoint the variables that are most closely linked and potentially impactful.

Table 4.7.1

<i>Correlation Matrix</i>				
		TURNOVER INTENTION	ACCESS	BENEFITS
Pearson Correlation	Turnover Intention	1.000	-.171	.101
	Training Accessibility	-.171	1.000	.350
	Training Benefits	.101	.350	1.000

Note: Pearson correlation range: -1 to +1, indicating perfect negative (-1), no (0), and perfect positive (+1) linear relationships (Alzoraiki et al., 2023; Ateeq, 2023).

In Table 4.7.1, Training benefits and turnover intention exhibit a moderately positive Pearson correlation coefficient of .101, while Training accessibility shows a weak negative correlation of -.171. The p-values for Training benefits and accessibility are .000 and .031, respectively, indicating statistical significance. Training Accessibility's negative correlation suggests a potential decrease in turnover intention, whereas the positive correlation between Training benefits and turnover intention implies that perceived benefits may elevate turnover intention.

Regression

Regression analysis is a statistical technique employed in quantitative research to model and analyze multiple variables (Cresswell, 2013). This method is particularly useful when examining the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. Regression analysis is a statistical technique that is employed to examine the nature of the associations between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables.

Table 4.8.1 – *Regression Table*

Variable	Values		T	Sig.
	Turnover Intention			
Training Accessibility	-.155	-.236	-2.451	.016
Training Benefits	.177	.184	1.909	.059

dependent variable : Turnover intention, Acceptable range for regression coefficients depends on context but generally includes values between -2 and +2 for significance (Ali, AlZgool, Alzoraiki, Milhem, & Al-Absy, 2023).

Table 4.8.1 presents the results of a linear regression study involving two independent variables, training accessibility and training benefits, with turnover intention as the dependent variable. Notably, the coefficient and standardized coefficient for "Training Accessibility" are both negative (-.236), indicating an inverse relationship. This suggests that easier access to training reduces the likelihood of employees leaving their current roles. The significant t-statistic (p-value < .05) demonstrates a statistically significant association between training accessibility and turnover intention. On the other hand, the positive coefficient value (.177) shows that Training Benefits have a positive influence on turnover intent (.184). This means that a rise in training benefits usually accompanies a rise in employees' intention to leave. However, the t-statistic for training benefits has a p-value of .059, which is more than the often accepted .05 threshold, suggesting that the association is not statistically significant.

Discussion and Conclusion

This final chapter synthesizes the significance of the study, critically analyzes the findings, and draws conclusions based on the research questions and hypotheses. The primary objective was to investigate the relationship between training and turnover intention, with this chapter presenting the findings, their interpretation, and a comparison of the results.

Evaluation of Study Hypotheses

Interpreting the hypotheses in light of the findings, Hypothesis 1a was supported as there was a positive direct association between Training Benefits and Turnover Intention. Conversely, Hypothesis 1b was not supported, as a negative direct relationship was observed between Training Accessibility and Turnover Intention. Analyzing the results from the linear regression analysis, it is evident that the accessibility of training has a significant negative impact on turnover intention. In contrast, while the benefits of training demonstrated a positive direct effect, it did not reach statistical significance. This study suggests that enhancing the accessibility of training could be an effective strategy for reducing employees' intention to leave, aligning with findings from studies such as Erthan and Sesen (2022) and Aminah et al. (2022) highlighted in the literature review. Consequently, this research implies that employees with better access to training are likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

However, the positive direct effect observed between Training Benefits and Employee Turnover Intention suggests that employees who benefit from training are more likely to leave their current organizations. This phenomenon could be attributed to employees considering leaving the organization strategically using training opportunities to enhance their skills and increase their attractiveness to other employers. Additionally, factors such as the training's limited relevance to employees' job responsibilities or a lack of post-training support and reinforcement might explain this positive direct effect.

Implications and Recommendations

These findings hold important implications for organizations aiming to reduce turnover intentions. To mitigate turnover intentions, companies should consider:

Enhancing Training Accessibility: Organizations can focus on making training more accessible to employees, ensuring it aligns with their work responsibilities, and providing necessary support to maximize its effectiveness. **Evaluating Training Programs:** Regular assessments of training programs should be conducted to gauge their impact on employee turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and engagement. **Follow-up surveys with trainees** can provide insights into the long-term effects of training. **Contextualizing Training:** Training programs should be designed to align closely with employees' job roles and career growth prospects. Ensuring the relevance and applicability of training can help prevent unintended turnover.

Limitations and Future Research

While these findings shed light on the relationship between training and turnover intention, certain limitations should be acknowledged. Future research could address these limitations by utilizing more diverse samples, exploring additional predictors and mediators of turnover intention, and employing alternative data collection methods. Objective indicators like actual turnover rates could also be considered to enhance the understanding of turnover intention dynamics. In conclusion, this study has contributed valuable insights into the complex interplay between training and turnover intention. It highlights the potential benefits of accessible training in reducing turnover intention, while also underscoring the need for training programs to be closely tailored to employees' job roles and career aspirations. By addressing these factors, organizations can take proactive steps to enhance employee retention and create a more satisfied and committed workforce.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study's findings indicate that making training more easily accessible may be an efficient way to lessen workers' desire to leave their current positions in Saudi Arabia.

Therefore, organizations in Saudi Arabia can increase productivity, morale, and profits by providing employees with

easy access to job-specific training. However, further research can also be conducted to investigate the relationships between training availability, benefits, and other predictors of turnover intention to gain a wholistic understanding of the private sector in Saudi Arabia.

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