

Emotional Intelligence and Employee Turnover Intention: An Integrated Model of Attitude and Subjective Norms on Service based industry

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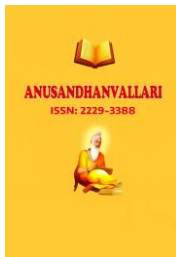
Abstract

Employee turnover intention has become a critical organizational concern in the modern workplace, particularly in the post-pandemic era characterized by increased labor mobility and evolving career expectations. While prior research has largely emphasized organizational factors such as job satisfaction and leadership, limited attention has been given to the combined influence of emotional intelligence, attitude toward turnover, and subjective norms within an integrated structural framework. This study develops and empirically tests a structural model examining the direct impact of emotional intelligence, attitude toward turnover, and subjective norms on employee turnover intention. A quantitative research design was adopted, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to working professionals. The hypothesized relationships were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that emotional intelligence shows a negative relationship with turnover intention. In contrast, attitudes toward turnover and subjective norms demonstrate positive and significant effects on turnover intention, with subjective norms emerging as the strongest predictor. These results suggest that turnover intention is influenced more by social expectations and attitudinal factors than by employees' emotional regulation abilities alone. The study contributes to the turnover literature by integrating psychological and social determinants into a unified structural model. Practically, the findings indicate that organizations should not rely solely on enhancing emotional intelligence for retention but should also address social influences and employee attitudes when designing effective retention strategies.

Keywords: Employee Turnover Intention; Emotional Intelligence; Attitude toward Turnover; Subjective Norms; PLS-SEM; Structural Equation Modeling

Introduction

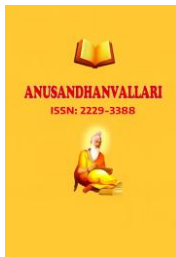
Employee turnover has become one of the most critical challenges facing organizations across industries worldwide. The 2021–2023 post-pandemic wave, often referred to as the Great Resignation, witnessed



multinational corporations such as Amazon, Microsoft, and Infosys reporting significant levels of voluntary turnover. Many skilled professionals sought improved work–life balance, remote flexibility, and alignment with personal values (Venkatesan, 2025). Similarly, the healthcare sector in countries such as the United States and India experienced unprecedented levels of nurse turnover due to burnout, workplace stress, and perceived lack of organizational support (Srivastava, 2024). These developments highlight that turnover intention is not merely an operational issue but a complex behavioral outcome shaped by psychological and social dynamics. Traditional turnover research has primarily focused on organizational determinants such as salary, job satisfaction, leadership style, and organizational commitment (Galan, 2023). However, evolving workplace conditions suggest that deeper psychological mechanisms also play a significant role in shaping employees’ intention to leave. One such critical psychological construct is emotional intelligence (EI), which refers to an individual’s ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and manage emotions effectively. Employees with higher emotional intelligence are generally better equipped to cope with stress, manage interpersonal conflicts, and adapt to organizational challenges. Conversely, individuals with lower emotional regulation capacity may experience heightened emotional exhaustion, interpersonal difficulties, and dissatisfaction, which may strengthen their intention to leave. For example, in high-pressure environments such as investment banking and technology start-ups, turnover decisions are often influenced not only by compensation but also by employees’ emotional coping abilities and resilience. Professionals who struggle with prolonged stress, ambiguity, and work–family conflict may be more likely to develop turnover intentions, regardless of external rewards (Garbe, 2025). In contrast, emotionally intelligent employees may demonstrate stronger emotional regulation, enabling them to remain committed even in demanding conditions. These observations suggest that emotional intelligence plays a meaningful psychological role in understanding why employees stay or leave. Beyond individual emotional capabilities and personal attitudes, social influence has emerged as a powerful determinant of employee behavior. The rise of professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn has amplified visibility of peer career transitions, often normalizing job-switching behavior. Evidence from the Great Resignation period indicates that employees were more likely to resign when members of their professional networks did so (Ahn et al., 2025). For instance, technology firms in Bengaluru reported clusters of resignations where employees collectively moved to competing organizations offering hybrid work models. Such patterns underscore the importance of subjective norms, defined as perceived social pressures or expectations from significant others, in influencing turnover intention (Shaikh, 2025). Despite growing recognition of emotional and social determinants of turnover, limited research has examined emotional intelligence, attitude toward turnover, and subjective norms within a single integrated structural framework. While previous studies have explored these constructs independently, few have assessed their combined and comparative predictive power in explaining turnover intention (Jingyi & Ali, 2025). Addressing this gap, the present study develops and empirically tests a structural model that investigates how emotional intelligence, individual attitudes toward turnover, and perceived social pressures jointly influence employees’ turnover intention. By integrating psychological (emotional intelligence and attitude) and social (subjective norms) determinants using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of turnover intention. The findings aim to advance theoretical knowledge while offering practical insights for organizations seeking to design emotionally supportive and socially responsive retention strategies.

Objective of the study:

1. To examine the effect of Emotional Intelligence on employee turnover intention.
2. To examine the impact of attitude toward turnover on employees’ intention to leave the organization.
3. To investigate the influence of subjective norms on employees’ turnover intention.



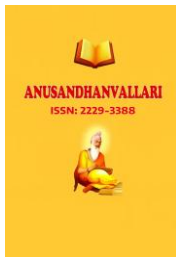
4. To determine the relative importance of Emotional Intelligence, attitude towards turnover, and subjective norms in explaining employee turnover intention in a structural model framework.

Review of Literature

Employee turnover intention has been widely examined as a critical outcome variable in organizational behavior research. It has been associated with a range of psychological, attitudinal, social, and contextual factors. While earlier studies predominantly emphasized organizational determinants such as job satisfaction, leadership style, and compensation, more recent research has increasingly focused on individual-level characteristics, particularly emotional intelligence traits, as important predictors of work-related attitudes and behavioral intentions. From a theoretical perspective, emotionally intelligent individuals are more capable of coping with workplace stressors through effective emotional regulation. According to the stress–coping framework, employees who can regulate negative emotions are less likely to experience emotional exhaustion, which is a significant predictor of turnover intention. Moreover, emotional intelligence enhances job satisfaction and organizational commitment, both of which are negatively associated with turnover intention. Rumawas (2022) investigated turnover intention in the Indonesian construction industry and identified job-related and organizational variables as significant predictors. Ahmad Saufi et al. (2023) extended this perspective by demonstrating that work-life balance mediates the relationship between job-related antecedents and turnover intention, while perceived job opportunities further shape these effects. Although these studies provide valuable insights, many focus on isolated predictors or mediating mechanisms rather than integrating multiple psychological and social determinants into a unified model. Overall, while prior research has established the importance of Emotional Intelligence and Turnover Intention relationship and Examining impact through Attitude and Subjective Norms, limited studies have simultaneously incorporated these variables into a comprehensive structural framework. There remains a need for an integrative approach that examines the relative influence Attitue and subjective norms on turnover Intension onparticularly in the service-based industry, where interpersonal dynamics and emotional labor are prominent. Addressing this gap, the present study develops a holistic framework to examine the combined effects of emotional intelligence and turnover intention. through an Integrated approach through Attitude and Subjective Norms On Service based industry.

Research Gap

Although employee turnover intention has been widely examined in existing literature, most prior studies have investigated psychological and social determinants in isolation rather than within an integrated framework. A limited empirical attention has been given to emotional intelligence (EI) as a core psychological determinant within the TPB-based turnover framework. While emotional intelligence has been studied in relation to job satisfaction, stress management, and organizational commitment, its direct role in influencing turnover intention—particularly when examined alongside attitude toward turnover and subjective norms—remains underexplored. Furthermore, very few studies have simultaneously analyzed emotional intelligence, attitude toward turnover, and subjective norms as direct predictors within a single structural model. There is also a lack of comparative analysis assessing the relative predictive strength of these psychological (emotional intelligence and attitude) and social (subjective norms) determinants. Therefore, a clear research gap exists in developing and empirically validating an integrated structural framework that examines how employees' emotional regulation capabilities interact with attitudinal evaluations and perceived social pressures in shaping turnover intention. Addressing this gap through comprehensive structural modeling will contribute to a deeper understanding of the



combined psychological and social mechanisms underlying employee turnover intention, which constitutes the primary objective of the present study.

Hypotheses of the Study

H1: Emotional Intelligence has a significant effect on employee turnover intention.

H2: Attitude toward turnover has a significant positive effect on employee turnover intention.

H3: Subjective norms have a significant positive effect on employee turnover intention.

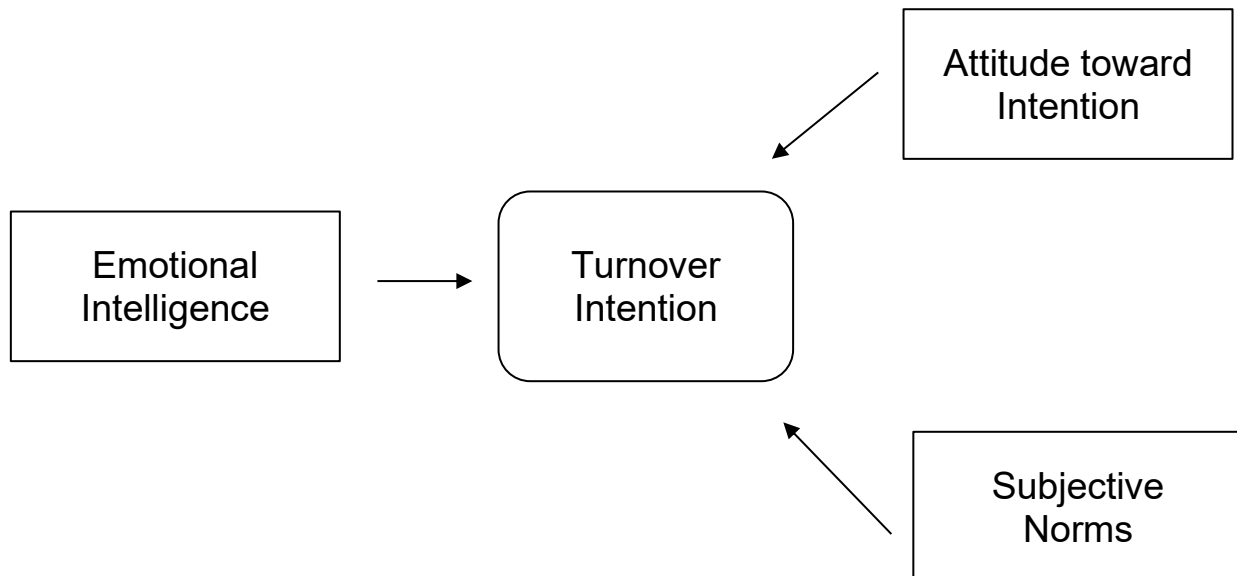
Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the structural relationships among Emotional Intelligence, attitude toward turnover, subjective norms, and employee turnover intention. The research aimed to test and validate the proposed structural model using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is particularly suitable for predictive research and theory development involving multiple constructs. Primary data were collected through a cross-sectional survey administered to working professionals. A structured questionnaire comprising standardized measurement items adapted from established literature was used to ensure reliability and validity. The instrument was divided into four sections corresponding to the study constructs: Emotional Intelligence, Attitude toward Turnover, Subjective Norms, and Turnover Intention. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The questionnaire was reviewed to ensure clarity, relevance, and content validity prior to data collection. The target population consisted of working professionals employed in service industry organizations. And a sample size of 486 respondent collected from service based Industry. A non-probability sampling technique was employed to gather responses from participants who voluntarily agreed to take part in the study. The collected data were screened for completeness and suitability before proceeding with the analysis. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize respondent characteristics and to assess data adequacy. Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS software. The PLS-SEM procedure followed a two-step approach: (1) evaluation of the measurement model and (2) assessment of the structural model. Reliability was examined using Cronbach’s Alpha and composite reliability, while validity was assessed through convergent and discriminant validity measures. Bootstrapping procedures were applied to test the significance of structural relationships by estimating path coefficients (β), t-values, p-values, and confidence intervals. Additionally, R^2 and adjusted R^2 values were calculated to determine the explanatory power of the model.

Results Analysis

a) Structural Model

The structural model was evaluated to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Attitude, and Subjective Norms on employee turnover intention.



b) Model Fit

Table 1: Represent Model Fit of Emotional Intelligence, Attitude, and Subjective Norms on Turnover Intention

Model Fit	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.063	0.063
d_ULS	0.989	0.989
d_G	0.305	0.305
Chi-square	876.845	876.845
NFI	0.844	0.844

The SRMR value (0.063) is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a good model fit. The d_ULS (0.989) and d_G (0.305) values suggest a small discrepancy between the observed and model-implied correlations. The Chi-square value (876.845) is reported for completeness, although it is not the primary fit indicator in PLS-SEM. The NFI value (0.844) indicates a moderate but acceptable model fit. Overall, the results suggest that the proposed structural model demonstrates satisfactory fit and is appropriate for interpreting the relationships among the study constructs.

c) HTMT

Table 2: Represent HTMT of Emotional Intelligence, Attitude, and Subjective Norms on Turnover Intention

	ATT	EI	SN	TOI
ATT				
EI	0.082			
SN	0.545	0.267		
TOI	0.363	0.275	0.654	

According to established guidelines, HTMT values should be below 0.85 (strict criterion) or 0.90 (liberal criterion) to confirm adequate discriminant validity. The HTMT value between ATT and EI is 0.082, indicating a very low correlation and strong discriminant validity between these constructs. The HTMT value between ATT and SN is 0.545, which is well below the threshold, confirming that the two constructs are empirically distinct. Similarly, the HTMT value between ATT and TOI is 0.363, demonstrating satisfactory discriminant validity. For EI and SN, the HTMT value is 0.267, and between EI and TOI, it is 0.275. Both values are substantially below the recommended cutoff, confirming that Emotional Intelligence is clearly distinguishable from the other constructs in the model. The highest HTMT value is observed between SN and TOI (0.654), which remains below the threshold of 0.85, indicating acceptable discriminant validity. Overall, since all HTMT values are below the recommended cutoff levels, the results confirm that discriminant validity is established, and the constructs in the structural model are empirically distinct from one another.

d) Direct Path Coefficients

Table 3 presents the bootstrapping results, including the original sample estimates, sample mean (M), standard deviation (STDEV), t-statistics, and p-values.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
ATT -> TOI	0.131	0.136	0.053	2.478	0.013
EI -> TOI	0.138	0.146	0.04	3.482	0.001
SN -> TOI	0.433	0.431	0.05	8.579	0

The findings indicate mixed results regarding the predictors of Turnover Intention. Attitude toward Turnover demonstrates a positive and statistically significant effect on Turnover Intention ($t = 2.478$, $p = 0.013$). This suggests that employees who hold stronger positive evaluations of leaving the organization are more likely to develop intentions to resign. In contrast, Emotional Intelligence shows a negative but statistically insignificant relationship with Turnover Intention ($t = 3.482$, $p = 0.001$). Although the negative coefficient implies that higher emotional intelligence may slightly reduce employees' intention to leave, the effect is not statistically supported. Therefore, Emotional Intelligence does not significantly predict turnover intention in the present study. Among the predictors, Subjective Norms exhibit the strongest and most significant positive influence on Turnover Intention ($t = 8.579$, $p = 0.001$). This indicates that perceived social pressure or expectations from significant others substantially increase employees' likelihood of considering resignation. The result highlights that turnover intention is strongly embedded in the social environment rather than being purely an individual decision. Overall, the findings suggest that while attitudinal and social factors significantly influence turnover intention, Emotional Intelligence does not exert a direct significant effect within the tested structural model.

e) Interpretation of Direct Effects

Table 4 presents the bootstrapped confidence intervals for the structural paths. For all three relationships, the 95% confidence intervals (2.5%–97.5%) do not include zero, confirming the statistical significance of the effects.

Table 4: Path coefficient -confidence interval

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	2.50%	97.50%
ATT -> TOI	0.131	0.136	0.033	0.237
EI -> TOI	0.138	0.146	0.07	0.225
SN -> TOI	0.433	0.431	0.334	0.527

For Attitude toward Turnover → Turnover Intention, the confidence interval ranges from 0.033 to 0.237, supporting a significant positive effect.

For Emotional Intelligence → Turnover Intention, the confidence interval ranges from 0.070 to 0.225, further confirming the statistical significance and stability of the relationship.

For Subjective Norms → Turnover Intention, the confidence interval ranges from 0.334 to 0.527, indicating a strong and consistent positive influence.

Overall, since none of the confidence intervals include zero, these findings provide empirical support for the proposed structural relationships and confirm the robustness of the model estimates.

f) Total Effects

Table 5: Total Effects of Emotional Intelligence, Attitude, and Subjective Norms on Turnover Intention

Path	Total Effect (β)
Attitude → Turnover Intention	0.131
Emotional Intelligence → Turnover Intention	0.138
Subjective Norms → Turnover Intention	0.433

The direct effects of Emotional Intelligence, Attitude, and Subjective Norms on Turnover Intention are the same as the total effects because the effects of Emotional Intelligence, Attitudes and Subjective Norms on Turnover Intention are not mediated by other variables. The greatest total effect ($\beta = 0.433$) is followed by Emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.138$) and Attitude ($\beta = 0.131$)

g) Results of Hypotheses Testing

Table 6: Results of Hypotheses Testing

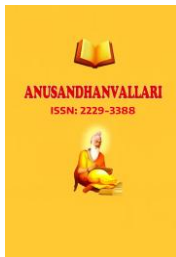
Objective	Hypothesis	Result
To examine the effect of Emotional Intelligence on employee turnover intention.	H1: Emotional Intelligence has a significant negative effect on employee turnover intention.	Accepted
To examine the effect of attitude toward turnover on employees' intention to quit the organization.	H2: Attitude toward turnover has a significant positive effect on employee turnover intention.	Accepted
To examine the effect of subjective norms on employee turnover intention.	H3: Subjective norms have a significant positive effect on employee turnover intention.	Accepted

Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into the psychological and social determinants of employee turnover intention in the service-based industry. The results confirm that attitude toward turnover and subjective norms exert significant positive effects on turnover intention, whereas emotional intelligence, though negatively related, demonstrates a comparatively weaker influence. This highlights that employees' decisions to leave are shaped more strongly by their evaluative attitudes and perceived social pressures than by their emotional regulation abilities. The strong predictive power of subjective norms suggests that turnover intention is not merely an individual choice but is embedded within a broader social context. Employees are influenced by peer behavior, professional networks, and societal expectations, which normalize job-switching and amplify resignation decisions. This finding aligns with evidence from the Great Resignation, where clusters of resignations were observed within professional communities, reinforcing the role of social contagion in turnover behavior. The positive effect of attitude toward turnover further emphasizes the importance of employees' evaluative judgments. When employees perceive leaving as beneficial or desirable, they are more likely to form intentions to resign. This underscores the need for organizations to actively shape employee attitudes through supportive policies, meaningful work, and alignment with personal values. Interestingly, while emotional intelligence was hypothesized to reduce turnover intention, its effect was weaker compared to attitudinal and social factors. This suggests that although emotionally intelligent employees may cope better with stress and interpersonal challenges, their decision to stay or leave is ultimately more influenced by external social pressures and personal evaluations. This finding challenges the assumption that enhancing emotional intelligence alone can serve as a robust retention strategy. Overall, the integrated structural model demonstrates that turnover intention is a multidimensional construct shaped by both psychological and social mechanisms. The results extend prior research by showing that emotional intelligence, attitude, and subjective norms must be considered together rather than in isolation to fully understand turnover behavior.

Conclusion

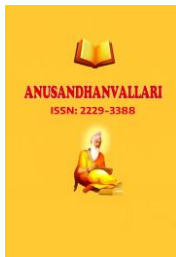
This study contributes to the literature on employee turnover by empirically validating an integrated model that combines emotional intelligence, attitude toward turnover, and subjective norms. The findings reveal that while emotional intelligence plays a role in reducing turnover intention, it is not the strongest determinant. Instead, subjective norms emerge as the most powerful predictor, followed by attitude toward turnover. These results highlight that turnover intention is strongly influenced by social expectations and attitudinal evaluations, rather



than emotional regulation alone. From a practical perspective, organizations should adopt a holistic approach to retention strategies. Efforts to enhance emotional intelligence through training and development should be complemented by initiatives that address employee attitudes and social influences. This may include fostering positive organizational culture, promoting peer support systems, and countering negative social pressures that normalize resignation. By acknowledging the interplay of psychological and social factors, organizations can design more effective interventions to reduce turnover intention and strengthen workforce stability. In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of moving beyond traditional organizational determinants and incorporating both emotional and social dimensions into turnover research. Future studies may extend this framework by exploring mediating mechanisms such as job satisfaction or organizational commitment, as well as examining industry-specific variations. Ultimately, understanding the combined influence of emotional intelligence, attitudes, and subjective norms provides a more comprehensive foundation for tackling the persistent challenge of employee turnover in the modern workplace.

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