

# HRM Practices for Employee Retention: An Analysis of Pakistani Companies

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## Abstract

Human capital is the life-blood for any organization, they are considered to be the most dynamic element. Even though most of the organizations are technology driven, yet human resources are required to run that technology. With growing economy of Pakistani market, there is a tough competition in the market and people have good amount of opportunities available in their hands. Hence the Pakistani organizations these days are facing the biggest challenge of retaining its best talents. Keeping in account the need of this time and the sensitivity of the subject, the present study tries to review various available literatures to explore important variables and test the correlation of identified variables with employee retention. The results of this study have proved a significant impact of independent variable on dependent variables.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Employee Retention, supervisors support, work environment

## INTRODUCTION

Employee retention has become a critical issue and an imperative subject on many grounds. In developing economies, workforce demand is increasing and talent competition is fierce. It is a new era of modern technology and competitive business environment. Organizations are continuously changing. This changing environment is not only effecting the organizations but also the employees. In order to maximize organizational efficiency and for optimal utilization of the resources, human resource must be managed properly. Human resource management plays a vital role in this regard. Employee retention is a vital issue and a challenge faced by most of the organizations now-a-days. There are number of factors which promote employees to stay or leave the organization. These may be external factors, internal factors or the combined effect of both.

Winning organizations follow the essential philosophy of valuing and investing in their people (Maguire, 1995; Annand, 1997). It has been found through various studies that managing turnover is a great challenge for employers, because different organizations use different techniques to hold its employees. The high salary or an authoritative designation is not always a tool to make employees stick to the organization but there are many other things as well (American Management Association, 1999). Satisfaction of employees and their retention are the foundation stone for organizations' success (Osteraker, 1999).

The retention of experienced, skilled and productive employees can be a potential source for organization to gain a competitive edge (King, 1997; Cheng and Brown, 1998; Roepke, Agarwal et al., 2000). Unlike technology, it is difficult to imitate people, hence people centered strategy is an important source of gaining competitive edge. The organizations outperform if they are able to retain their high performers for a longer duration and at the same time they can avoid the expenses that are incurred in advertisement of unoccupied posts, recruitment, selection and training of new comers. Therefore it is desirable to maintain the best performers in today's competitive era where the competitors are seen to grab employees from each other.

Turnover is considered to be costly for both the employees and the employers. Replacement cost is found to be high by the employers (Mitchell et al., 2001). Therefore, the decision to leave or stay in any organization involves evaluation of benefits and costs. Employee will be willing to quit if the present value of returns linked with turnover exceeds psychological as well as monetary costs of leaving the firm. Dissatisfaction among the workers may be a major reason for missing from work place. The fact however remains that the absence from workplace irrespective of the reasons, adds considerable cost of retaining a large number of employees that is required to meet the consequences arising out of the phenomena of absenteeism.

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Employee retention is one of the important issues that organizations should focus on by finding out the influencing variables and hence move strategically towards implementing necessary policies efficiently for their employee retention. Employee retention plays a significant role in development and accomplishment of organizations objectives and goals. Employee retention is a vital source of competitive edge for an organization. This research study is aimed at exploring the key factors that contribute to retaining employees in Pakistani organizations.

In today's era employee and employer relationship is directly affected by changes in trade agreements, global economics, technology and the like. Loyalty was the foundation stone of this relationship until recently. The loss of capable and talented workforce is detrimental to present and future success of an organization.

Employees may leave their workplaces if they are dissatisfied, unenthusiastic and under paid (Coff, 1997), and while organizations are trying to retain such employees they may face other challenges like high salary demand from employees that may not comply with practices of organizations or with managers' directions. Beside these issues organizations objective to retain talented and productive employees can become complicated due to lack of information about employees performance as without sufficient information an organization may not be able to differentiate between productive and non-productive employees. Adverse selection results due to inadequate information about employees' performance (Grossman & Hart 1986). The talented workers may switch their jobs for better opportunities and the ones with poor performance are likely to stay. This usually happens when due to insufficient information the talented employees are not rewarded. Because of management's failure in differentiating talented worker from the others, productive and non-productive employees end up receiving equal or nearly equal package of compensation and perks. Even if a company is able to retain its productive employees, it still may have to cope up with agency cost resulting from employees. It is observed that employees may act in their own interest and may deviate from the interest of their organization if the employer fails to gather information about its employee's activities. This deviation in the interest of employee and employer results in an additional cost to the organization.

Motivational style of a company is another domain contributing to decreased satisfaction of employees. In the past most of the firms relied on two major strategies for retaining employees. Either they increased wages / salaries till the situation became stabilized or they raised the budget for training. But in today's situation these solutions do not work anymore as they alone are not enough to motivate and retain better employees.

In order to fully understand the retention issues within an organization there is a critical need to identify why people leave. It is useful to analyze the reasons for leaving and the factors that make them stick to the organization. This revelation is very important and stresses the need for managers of organization to constantly look out for the challenges in retaining employees and seeking new ways of retaining them so as to reduce turnover rate. This study attempts to explore the variables / factors that can help Pakistani organizations to retain the talented workforce.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Acquisition, maintenance and management of talented people in an organization are important considerations for cautious investment of human resources. It is appropriate that employees should be trained adequately during orientation and selection process in order to be well informed with the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake the assigned responsibilities of the designation in pursuit of achievement of organizational goals. The selection and training processes cost a good amount to organization in terms of time, finance and equipment. This shows that loss of a trained and talented employee from the organization results in a direct loss to the organization, which it incurred not only during recruitment and selection but also during employee replacement. In order to retain employees, it is important that the organization uses proper HR practices otherwise the turnover rate of employees will increase.

Though ample amount of research is available on employee turnover and retention, but most of the studies have focused on predictors of turnover at individual level with less attention paid on the human resource management practices which affect employee retention and turnover at organizational level. A study on high performance issues conducted by Accenture (2001) revealed that strategies that organizations adopt to retain employees are primarily initiate in Europe, US, Asia and then Australia.

Ukaegbu, C. (2000) investigated the relationship between working conditions and employees' intention to stay in private manufacturing companies in Nigeria. The total participants of the study were twenty manufacturing companies. All the selected companies were functional and belonged to array of industries. The findings of the study confirmed that working conditions or extrinsic factors are a strong predictor of commitment to stay in any organization, in this study it was also found that a large group of workers were dissatisfied with their working conditions. It was suggested that in order to create a strong workforce for the success and development of industries, the employers should work to have a balance between the interest of employees and that of the organization.

Employees who leave their workplaces can have a significant impact on organizations outcomes. The turnover rate increases if employees feel distracted or confused after organization's major transition (Bridges, 1991). The intent of the research done by Kreisman, B.J. (2002) was to clarify various employee retention issues that are of meticulous importance to organizations. The author discussed Insight discovery process in the research which is a process of communication and understanding between managers and employees and also revealed that this system can engage employees in a way that foster greater commitment towards organization through better job satisfaction. The findings suggested that different insights can motivate and retain the talent in the organization, such as manager and employee relationship, job description, interviewing candidates, employee orientation, career growth, performance management through proper feedback and team bonding.

Pajo, K. et al. (2010) explored the relationships between training and development, employees' attitude

and turnover intentions in small and medium sized firms. The results of the study revealed that employees if participate in training activities and career development events will less likely leave their company. However this participation in training and development is completely intervened by job satisfaction level and support that employees get from their organization. It was suggested that organizations should work on the implementation of practices that will enhance job satisfaction and promote supportive working relations.

Anis, A. et al. (2011) investigated the link between job satisfaction, employee retention, perceived support from supervisors and compensation while believing organizational commitment as intervening variable in Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry. The research findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between the above discussed variable and concludes that organizational commitment will lead to job satisfaction and retention. It was proposed after the study that employees who are satisfied with their job are less likely to switch their jobs and are more loyal to the firm; hence employers should work on the discussed variables in order to retain employees in pharmaceutical industry.

Sohail, N. et al. (2011) examined the problems associated with losing people in Pakistan's Textile Industry. The determinants identified for employee retention include compensation based on merit, working environment and career path. Among all other determinants, career path is found to be the most important tool for retaining people. They suggested that organizations must pay attention to the career plans to hold back the talent and to gain benefit in a long run.

Reducing employee turnover intention is a great challenge for HR managers of today's organizations. Malik, M.E. et al. (2011) identified many other techniques besides attractive pay and motivational stuff like managerial attitude, job involvement, job satisfaction, training consistency, working conditions, communication level, and employee's priorities. The data was collected from 5 big industries of Pakistan i.e. Higher Education, Telecommunication, banking, manufacturing and hospitality. The findings of the study revealed that if there is less job satisfaction, less communication among different levels, and lack of training regularity then employees are more likely to quit their jobs. Hence this research provided direction to HR people to reduce turnover rates.

Ng'ethe J.M. et al. (2012) worked on employee retention as it is one of the issues that is being faced by both public and private sector organizations. They identified that in Kenya's Public Universities the academic staff retention is a big challenge. On the basis of Herzberg's two factor theory, various determinants for retaining staff were investigated that includes both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors incorporate leadership, distributive justice, salary and work environment while extrinsic ones embrace promotional opportunities, training and development and autonomy and recognition. The study suggested that by inculcating these factors employees can be retained who will support their universities to fulfill the devised vision and mission of excellence.

Irshad, M. (2011) studied the relationship between human resource practices and employee retention in various organizations. The researcher reviewed the previous literature and found HR practices the most important and valuable mean of influencing employees retention in any organization. This research revealed that organization culture, compensation, rewards, recognitions, training and career advancement play a key role in motivating employees that will lead to employee retention. Organizational justice is also found to be an important tool for retaining employees and hence the author suggests that organizations must follow fairness formula in order to retain its prowess employees.

Parvin, M.M. et al. (2011) evaluated the job satisfaction of employees in pharmaceutical industry of India. The researcher tended to investigate the factors that are significant in affecting job satisfaction such as working conditions, pay and promotion, job security, relationship with co-worker/supervisors and fairness. The results indicated that all the variables have a significant and positive impact on employee retention in pharmaceutical industry. The author suggested that organizations must create a favorable working environment for its employees and also the employees should be treated fairly by the organization, this will help in increasing their job satisfaction and thus a better retention in the company.

Walia & Bajaj, (2012) conducted a research to investigate the impact of Human resource practices on employee retention in banking sector of Haryana state. The data was collected from the employees of ICICI, AXIS and HDFC bank. Variables taken for study includes; working environment, training, career growth opportunities, work life balance, proper incentive policies, supervisor support and grievance policies. The findings of the study indicated a positive relationship between all the HRM practices and employee retention. It is concluded that if HRM practices are well organized then employees would like to work in such company that will increase the retention rate.

Deery, M. (2008) examined the role that work-life balance (WLB) plays in retention of employees in hospitality and tourism industry. The researcher reviewed the literature to provide an overview about the key issues that have an impact on employee's decision to leave or stay in an organization. This paper mainly focused on importance of job attitudes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction and also part that work-life balance plays in employee turnover. It is concluded that obtaining a healthy balance between work and life will alleviate high turnover rate and results in better retention in the organization. The author suggested different

strategies for organizational and government consideration that not only include work-life balance policies but also cater the role of proper recruitment and training of employees for improving ones satisfaction and commitment level and hence employees intention to stay in the organization.

Okaioga, C. K. (2012) investigated the retention of employees in manufacturing sector. The researcher explored the influence of reward system on employee's intention to stay in any organization. After a careful analysis of the data it is proposed in conceptual framework that promotion, increment in salary and proper training would lead to better employee retention. The research findings indicated that employees were aware of existence of reward policies and almost half of them would quit their employer if they are given a better opportunity somewhere else. This proves that rewards are greatly influential on employee's retention. The author also recommended that employee's opinion should be taken into consideration while formulating or revising reward system so that they feel valued and may get a sense that their needs are taken care of by their employer.

Firth, L. et al. (2004) examined the variables that may be prognostic of employee retention. The researchers collected the data from retail sales people for measuring variables such as job satisfaction, support from supervisors, commitment to organization, locus of control, self esteem, the perceived stressors in one's job (e.g. work overload, job ambiguity) and their intention to leave that workplace. The data was analyzed by using path analysis technique to test the relationship between different variables. It was noticed that emotional support from the supervisor and self-esteem greatly influence intention to quit by acting as a mediator between the variables. The authors suggested that it is extremely important to monitor workloads and relationship between supervisor and subordinate; this will reduce the level of stress and increase retention rate. Also the heads of the firms need to observe both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards available to employees. Taking these actions will result in increased job satisfaction and better commitment with the firm.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The collection of data was done through both the secondary and primary resources. Questionnaire was used as a primary source of data collection. The groundwork of this research rely on the employees responses. The questionnaire entailed the questions related to the variables that are taken in the research model. There are five Independent variables in this study; 1.Supervisor support 2.Work environment 3.Work life Balance policies 4.Career development 5.Rewards and recognition and one dependent variable i.e. employee retention by taking job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Study participants were the employees working in mixture of different companies in Pakistan.

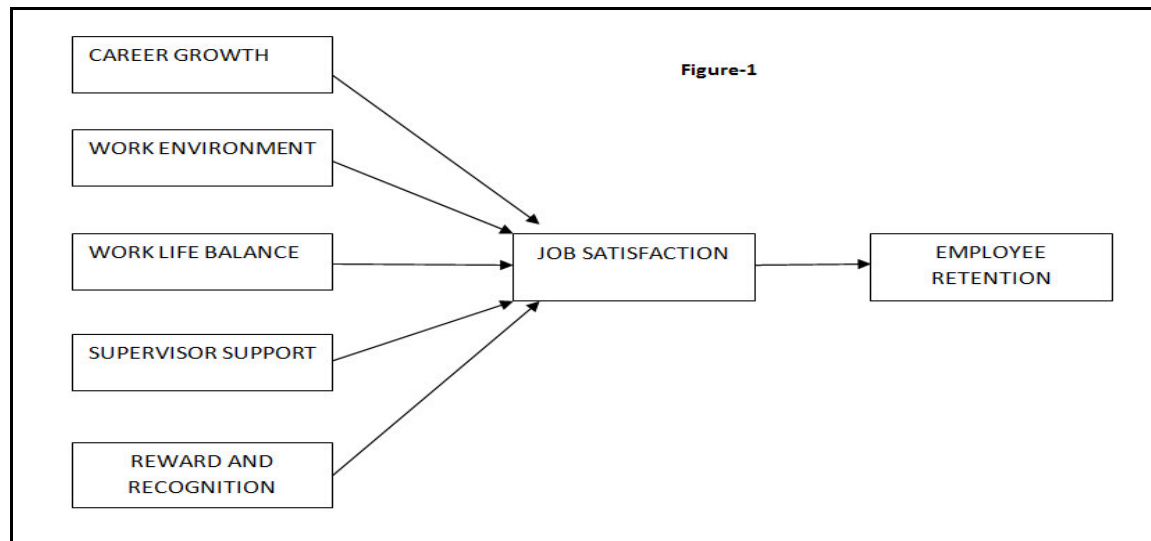
#### **HYPOTHESES**

On the basis of the discussed literature, following hypothesis have been developed for this research study where the variables are being tested for their association with each other.

- H1: Supervisor support has a correlation with employee retention*
- H2: Career development has a correlation with employee retention*
- H3: Rewards and recognition have a correlation with employee retention*
- H4: Work environment has a correlation with employee retention*
- H5: Job satisfaction has a correlation with employee retention*
- H6: Work life balance has a correlation with employee retention*

#### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/MODEL**

The following framework is developed for the purpose of studying the relationship of independent variables (career growth, work environment, works life balance, supervisor support, reward & recognition) with dependent variable (employee retention) by taking job satisfaction as a mediating variable.



**ANALYSIS**

**Descriptive Statistics: Mean and Standard Deviation**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>AGE</b>	384	27.00	47.00	36.9948	4.73639
<b>JOB DURATION</b>	384	.90	12.00	5.0854	3.31428
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	384				

**Table 1**

From Table 1, it can be seen that the ages of the employees of various organizations vary from 27 to 47 years with a mean age of 36.9948 years and a standard deviation of 4.73639 years. Similarly the job duration of these employees vary from 9 months to 12 years with a mean of 5.0854 years and a standard deviation of 3.31428 years.

**Cross Table: JOB DURATION \* GENDER Cross tabulation**

	Count	GENDER		Total
		Male	Female	
<b>JOB DURATION</b>	less than 1 year	0	20	20
	1-3	105	38	143
	4-6	28	28	56
	7-9	82	52	134
	More than 9 years	29	2	31
<b>Total</b>		<b>244</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>384</b>

**Table 2**

Table 2 is a cross tabulation of job duration and gender of respondents belonging to different organizations of Pakistan. This data show that more male respondents (i.e. 105) fall under the category of 1 to 3 years job duration and 38 females belongs to the same group. In job duration of 4 to 6 years the ratio of working male is equal to that of female. It can be seen from the data that 29 males have an experience of working more than 9 years in their present organization whereas the number of females with long job duration is comparatively much less.

**Inter Item Consistency of Items Use in Constructs**

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach
<b>Supervisor Support</b>	5	0.979
<b>Worklife Balance</b>	5	0.977
<b>Career Development</b>	4	0.970
<b>Rewards &amp; Recognition</b>	6	0.968
<b>Work Environment</b>	5	0.956
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	8	0.977

**Table 3**

Table 3 demonstrates inter item consistency of the items that are used in construct. Cronbach alpha is used to measure the reliability of the items in questionnaire. In this research multiple likert questions in a

questionnaire were used for which if the value is greater than 0.6 then it is said that the scale is reliable. The score was calculated for each subscale of the questionnaire. All the values of Cronbach alpha are found to be more than 0.6 which shows that the items of constructs are having inter item consistency. All the variables i.e. supervisor support, work life balance, career development, rewards and recognition, work environment and job satisfaction are found to have the value of Cronbach Alpha more than 0.75 which shows that the items of these constructs are highly correlated. Hence the questionnaire is a reliable instrument for measuring identified variables.

**Mean Table: Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Supervisor Support	384	3.3411	1.58346
Career Development	384	3.3125	1.45830
Rewards Recognition	384	3.1953	1.30709
Work Environment	384	3.1745	1.15769
Job Satisfaction	384	3.7266	1.48473
Work Life Balance1	384	3.4115	1.48710
Valid N (listwise)	384		

**Table 4**

Table 4 provides the mean and standard deviation related with all constructs used in the research study. The means of all the determinants are found to be more than 3.0. The meanings of these values are given below:

Supervisor support was measured using positive statements therefore the more of it means that the employees find supervisors to be supportive. The value of 3.34 can be interpreted as the employees rate their supervisor support to be high in employee retention.

Work life balance was measured using positive statements therefore more of it depicts that the work life balance is present in the organizations. For the data of this research, the mean is found to be 3.41 which show that the respondents have rated work life balance significant in employee retention.

Career development was measured using positive statements therefore more value represents that employees find career development to be important in their long job duration. The value of 3.31 can be interpreted that the employees rate career development to be high in employee retention in their organizations.

Rewards and recognition were measured using the positive statements hence more value is a sign that employees have rewards & recognition in their organization. The value of mean is 3.19 show that employees rate rewards & recognition significant in employee retention.

Work environment was again measured by taking positive statements therefore more value confirm that employees have a good working environment at their workplaces. The value is 3.17 which can be interpreted as the employees have an opinion that a proper working environment plays a vital role in employee retention.

Job satisfaction was also measured by using positive statements therefore more value of it means that the employees rate job satisfaction to be significant in employee retention. The mean value of job satisfaction is 3.72.

### REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The following function was estimated to find out the significance of dependent variable.

$$Employee\ Retention = Function \left( \begin{array}{l} Supervisor\ Support, Career\ Development, \\ Rewards\ And\ Recognition, Work\ Environment, \\ Job\ Satisfaction, Work\ Life\ Balance \end{array} \right)$$

$$Employee\ retention = \beta_1 + \beta_2 Supervisor\ Support + \beta_2 Work\ Life\ Balance + \beta_4 Career\ Development + \beta_5 Rewards\ And\ Recognition + \beta_6 Work\ Environment + \beta_7 Job\ Satisfaction$$

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.909 <sup>a</sup>	.825	.823	1.39546

a. Predictors: (Constant), JS Rating, CD Rating, SS Rating, WLB Rating, RR Rating, WE Rating  
 ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	3472.905	6	578.817	297.240	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	734.134	377	1.947		
	Total	4207.038	383			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), JS Rating, CD Rating, SS Rating, WLB Rating, RR Rating, WE Rating.  
 Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-26.796	2.396		-11.181	.000
	SS Rating	.914	.099	.213	9.252	.000
	WLB Rating	.700	.163	.098	4.294	.000
	CD Rating	.415	.147	.065	2.827	.005
	RR Rating	-.464	.129	-.082	-3.596	.000
	WE Rating	1.484	.114	.351	13.007	.000
	JS Rating	1.075	.040	.713	26.830	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

**Table 5**

**INTERPRETATION OF REGRESSION MODEL**

Table 5 shows the regression analysis of the variables taken for the study. The value of R - square is found to be 0.825 which indicates that 82.5 percent of the variation in employee retention can be explained by variability in supervisor support, work life balance, work environment, rewards and recognition, career development and job satisfaction.

The statistical value of F is 297.240 which is statistically significant at a level of 0.0005, this suggests a linear relationship among the dependent and independent variables i.e. increase in independent variables (supervisor support, career development, rewards and recognition, work life balance, work environment and job satisfaction) will result in an increase in dependent variable (Employee retention).

The beta value of supervisor support rating is 0.914 which means that this variable has 91.4% impact on employee retention. If supervisor role in supporting employees is increased by 1 % then there will be 0.914 point increase in employee retention. Also the t value is identified as 9.252 with p value = 0.0005 which demonstrates that there is a very significant impact of supervisor support on employee retention. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate one is accepted which states that supervisor support is positively correlated with employee retention.

The beta value of career development opportunities is found to be 0.415 which means that there is 41.5 % impact of this variable on employee retention. If career development opportunities in organization are increased by 1 % then there will be 0.415 point increase in employee retention. Also the t value is identified as 2.827 with p value = 0.005 which demonstrates that there is a significant impact of career development on employee retention. Therefore null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate is accepted stating that career development is positively correlated with employee retention.

The beta value of rewards and recognition ratings is found to be -0.464 which shows that there is 46.4 % impact of the variable on employee retention. If rewards and recognition for the employees are increased by 1 % then there will be 0.464 point decrease in employee retention. The t value for rewards and recognition is identified as -3.596 with p value equals to 0.0005 which demonstrates that there is a significant but negative impact of rewards and recognition on employee retention. Hence alternate hypothesis of positive correlation between rewards and recognition and employee retention is accepted.

The beta value of work environment is found to be 1.484 which means that if there is 1 % improvement in working environment then employee retention will increase by 1.484 %. The t value is identified as 13.007 with p value = 0.0005 which demonstrates that there is a significant impact of work environment on retaining employees. Therefore null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate one is accepted.

The value of beta coefficient for job satisfaction is found to be 1.075 which means that if there is 1 % increase in employees' job satisfaction then their retention will improve by 1.075%. The t value is 26.830 with p

value = 0.0005 which demonstrates that there is a significant impact of employees job satisfaction on employee retention. Here also the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate one of positive correlation between the two is accepted.

The beta value of work life balance is found to be .700 which means that if there is 1 % improvement in work life balance policies then employee retention rate will increase by 0 .700% The t value is identified as 4.294 with p value = 0.0005 which demonstrates that there is a significant impact implementation of work life balance policies on employee retention. As the t value is greater than 2, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate one is accepted.

## CONCLUSION

This issue of employee retention can be solved to some extent if both the employer and the employees understand each other. People are the best commodity of any organization and every organization must realize that without talented and qualified work force, its long term survival is not possible. The retention of existing people not only saves cost but also the company's image.

The outcomes of this research work have clearly revealed that all independent variables (supervisor support, career development, rewards and recognition, work environment, work life balance and job satisfaction) have a positive, significant and a direct impact on employee retention which is the dependent variable. It means that improvement in independent variables will cause the improvement in the dependent variable. Now-a-days it has become extremely important to have loyal, talented and committed workforce, as they are the ones whose commitment can truly pay off to achieve a competitive edge in the long run of a business. Therefore, if Pakistani organizations of different sectors work on these identified determinants and make efforts to apply them, then it would certainly foster employee retention. On the other side employees should also to understand the limitations of the company and hence they must be realistic in their demands. It is important to have a better understanding between the employer and the employee; this will resolve most of the issues of employee retention. Similarly, organizations should realize that talented and loyal employees are their best asset and without them organizations shall not be able to achieve desired goals.

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