

Received: 11/10/23 Approved: 22/06/24

THE PRINCIPAL ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS THAT LEAD TO TURNOVER INTENTION: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

PRINCIPAIS FATORES ORGANIZACIONAIS QUE GERAM INTENÇÃO DE *TURNOVER*: UMA REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA DA LITERATURA

Thábata Bierhals Hartwig¹
Thierry Mendes dos Santos²
Renata Heidtmann Bemvenuti³

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim of this paper is to examine the main organizational factors that lead to turnover intention among employees.

Theoretical framework: Turnover relates to the voluntary or involuntary departure of employees from a company and is directly or indirectly related to organizational costs and the ability to attract and retain talent. Understanding the organizational factors that influence turnover is crucial, if alternatives that keep employees engaged and companies with low turnover rates are to be proposed.

Methodology/Approach: The method chosen was the systematic literature review, *Methodi Ordinatio* being adopted to investigate the causes of turnover intention among employees.

Findings: The results showed that three main factors contribute to turnover intention: a lack of leader empowerment, inadequate task support, and the aspirations of young professionals. Other factors observed include a lack of emotional commitment, recognition, perspective, organizational diversity, training opportunities, support from colleagues, involvement in decision-making, and alignment with company values. Furthermore, precarious or insecure work environments, stress, the desire to start one's own business, extroversion, a jobs market offering promising alternative opportunities, and unconstructive feedback also contribute to turnover intention.

Research, practical & social implications: This study contributes to the efforts of companies wishing to invest their resources efficiently to ascertain the main causes of turnover, and thereby retain and attract talent.

Originality/Value: This study compiles and systematizes findings on the factors that lead to turnover intention, thereby benefitting decision-making aimed at retaining talent.

Keywords: Empowerment; Leaders; Systematic review.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este artigo objetiva compreender os principais fatores organizacionais que geram intenção de turnover nos trabalhadores.

Referencial Teórico: O turnover está relacionado direta e indiretamente com os custos de uma organização e com a obtenção/retenção de talentos. Ele representa o desligamento de um funcionário de forma voluntária ou involuntária sendo importante conhecer os fatores organizacionais que influenciam nesse índice para propor alternativas que mantenham os funcionários engajados e a empresa com pequenos índices de turnover.

Metodologia/Abordagem: O método consistiu em uma revisão sistemática da literatura. Foi aplicado o Methodi Ordinatio para entender as causas que geram intenção de turnover nos funcionários.

Resultados: Três principais fatores geram intenção de turnover: a falta de empoderamento dos líderes, a falta de suporte para realização das tarefas e a intenção em profissionais jovens. Outros fatores também foram observados: falta de compromisso afetivo, de reconhecimento, de perspectiva, de diversidade na organização, de capacitação, de apoio dos colegas, de inclusão na tomada de decisões e de identificação com a empresa. Além disso, ambientes precários e inseguros, estresse, desejo de abrir o próprio negócio, extroversão, mercado de trabalho com boas oportunidades e feedbacks não claros também causam intenção de turnover.

Contribuições, implicações práticas e sociais: Este estudo contribui para que empresas invistam de forma eficiente seus recursos nas principais causas de turnover para que retenham e atraiam talentos.

Originalidade/Valor: Este trabalho reúne e sistematiza achados sobre os fatores que podem gerar a intenção de turnover nas empresas, sendo útil para a tomada de decisões que visem reter talentos.

Palavras-chave: Empoderamento; Líderes; Revisão sistemática.

DOI: 10.15675/gepros.2992

¹Email: thabatabierhals@gmail.com; Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8936-3876>

²Email: thierrycraque@gmail.com; Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0560-925X>

³ Federal University of Pelotas (UFPEL), Balsa - Pelotas - RS – Brazil. Praça Domingos Rodrigues - Centro, CEP: 96010-450. Email: renatabemvenuti@gmail.com; Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000000346711011>

1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of turnover, or personnel turnover, is a central issue in contemporary organizations, directly impacting the stability and efficiency of work environments. The complexity of the labor market, changes in employee expectations and organizational dynamics have contributed to a growing interest in the understanding and effective management of turnover (Kim, 2018; Lu et al., 2023).

Turnover intention refers to an individual's subjective desire to leave an organization. In other words, turnover represents a tangible action through which an employee effectively disconnects from that organization (Mobley et al., 1979).

High employee turnover is a serious problem as it negatively affects the performance and profitability of an organization (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). In Brazil, the turnover rate rose from 41.9% in 2020 to 49.4% in 2022 (Brasil, 2023).

Understanding the main factors that lead to an intention to change employment is critical for employers actively seeking to encourage the retention of talent in their companies.

In this context, the bibliometric review has emerged as a strategic tool for critically exploring and analyzing the wide range of turnover research found within academic literature. A bibliometric review seeks not only to consolidate existing knowledge, but also to identify patterns, gaps and trends that have shaped debate on personnel turnover over the years (Kraus et al., 2022).

A number of systematic literature reviews have already addressed the theme of turnover in specific organizational areas, such as the study by Thin et al., (2022) that deals with turnover intention among pharmacists; or the study by Zhang et al., (2023) that investigates turnover intention among nurses in China.

The present work carried a systematic review of the literature that aimed to understand the main factors leading to turnover intention in a broad sense, among employees of companies of different economic activities. Thus, it may serve as a reference to guide future studies seeking to investigate the determining factors regarding turnover and retaining employee talent.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The concept and index of turnover

Turnover is a significant problem for organizations in the light of today's intense global competition (Alias et al., 2018), principally affecting human resources managers. Retaining skilled and valued workers is of great importance to employers, as employees are investments considered essential to the performance and success of their organizations (Mamun & Hasan, 2017).

For some companies, talent retention management has been successfully achieved; but for others it has proved to be a complex and difficult task. Turnover has become an increasingly visible and worrying factor, and the causes are often internal (Phillips & Connell, 2004).

For Marras (2016) turnover represents the percentage of the number of employees leaving a company during a certain timescale compared to the average number of active employees.

A company's turnover can be defined under two forms, voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary turnover is when an employee's departure is not actioned by their company. In such cases, it is important to identify the causes and make improvements to ensure existing talent is retained (Luz et al., 2018). Involuntary turnover, on the other hand, results from company choice; that is, an employee is dismissed. This may occur due to cost reduction, poor employee

performance or unsatisfactory behavior, among other reasons (Becker & Cropanzano, 2011).

A turnover index is critical to understanding the decisions an organization takes regarding its employees, the results of which may indicate a need to make internal changes. The index is typically calculated weekly, monthly or annually (Equation 1) (Marras, 2016).

$$Turnover = \frac{\text{Total number of employees admitted} + \text{Total number of employees who have left}}{\text{Total number of employees at the end of the period}} \quad (1)$$

If the index is high because employees are voluntarily leaving employment, the causes must be understood and modifications made. However, if a company is developing and growing, a high index may be justifiable (Marras, 2016).

2.2 Costs related to a high turnover index

The intellectual capital of a company and its people, for Gil (2007), considers the objective of investment to obtain and accumulate knowledge. High turnover rates are worrying for organizations, especially those where service is provided through intellectual capital, such as in technology companies that develop software. In such cases, a high indicator may be indicative of numerous negative aspects related to a company's finances, such as the high costs of retaining new talent (Entringer & Taveira, 2021).

The financial costs for companies in terms of turnover can be categorized as primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary costs are associated with the departure of an employee and the hiring of a replacement to occupy that position. Secondary costs relate to intangibles: qualitative properties such as the immediate and collateral effects following the exit of an employee. Finally, tertiary costs are understood to be those arising from turnover in the medium and long term (Table 1).

Table 1

Examples of primary, secondary and tertiary costs

Primary costs	Secondary costs	Tertiary costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruitment and selection (ads, testing, assessment, feedback for admission candidates and medical examinations); - Documentation, questionnaires, account opening, training, employee setting; hours spent by a leader to teach new tasks, related to registration, documentation and integration costs; - Dismissal interviews, vacation payments, and bonus payments, among others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drop in productivity resulting from a new employee's lack of knowledge of internal company processes; - Extra labor costs due to overtime worked by a team to cover the departure of a colleague, or even low performance; - Extra operational costs arising from the initial inability or low production of a new employee, necessitating the repetition of some tasks which do not meet the quality required due to a lack of knowledge; - The knock-on effect on the actions of the team that remains - related to the image and activity of the employee who has left and the needs of the employee who will replace them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linked to company image; - Increase of remuneration to new employees and associated salary readjustment to others; - Depreciation of equipment and proportional increase of charges in relation to insurance; - Repercussions, evident on social networks, may decrease the morale of a company, as new talent may demonstrate reluctance to enter a company that has a high turnover rate.

Source: Entringer & Taveira (2021); Miranda et al. (2017); Ramalho Luz et al. (2018); Silva et al. (2014).

Turnover can also have financial impacts on society, as there is the potential for increased production costs, resulting from poor productive capacity due to an absence of qualified people. A region can be affected socioeconomically when there are no professionals trained to perform a specific operation, thus making success unachievable (Mobley, 1992).

2.3 Internal and external organizational factors that impact on turnover indices

The internal causes of turnover reflect a lack of management involvement in decision making; a hostile work environment, where a lot of stress occurs; employees subjected to excessive workloads; obsolete equipment, making it difficult to carry out tasks; remuneration below market standards; activities not consistent with those agreed at the beginning of a selection process; lack of growth opportunity and incompetent leaders (Luz et al., 2018; Marras, 2016; Silva et al., 2014).

Franco & Matos (2010) affirm that most internal causes are linked to the management of people within an organization. Turnover rates should be analyzed and evaluated considering an organization as a whole, since isolated action - such as motivational programs, wage increases without a career plan or assessment of professional growth, and specific discussion about the valorization of people - do not demonstrably reduce dissatisfaction.

External causes relate to the offer of and demand for professionals within the marketplace, opportunity for new vacancies, economic circumstance, economic instability, and an increase or containment of business (Silva et al., 2018)

For Ulrich (2000) successful organizations are those which are able to quickly transform their strategies into action, efficiently manage processes, maximize employee commitment and create conditions for consistent change.

Davis & Newstrom (1992) believe that a significant challenge for the area of human resources is to know and understand each employee's motivational strength. Several authors present models to understand important factors affecting quality of life at work (Monaco & Guimarães, 2000), factors that may be related to the causes of turnover. Quality of life at work (QLW) aims to satisfy and improve an organization's working conditions through a set of decisions that encompass the investigation and introduction of innovative processes and improvement in technological, managerial, and structural areas (Dutra & Amorim, 2009).

3. METHODOLOGY

Systematic reviews of the literature are important for understanding a particular subject, as well as identifying research gaps. The present study used the *Methodi Ordinatio* proposed by Pagani et al., (2015), which is based on the *InOrdinatio* index, used to rank and select articles in order of importance.

The present research is both exploratory and explanatory. A systematic review of the literature was performed (*Methodi Ordinatio*) to understand which factors lead to turnover intention among employees (Gil, 2007; Pagani et al., (2015); Pagani et al., 2017).

The *Methodi Ordinatio* proposes the adoption of nine stages, described below.

1 - Establishment of a research intention: in the present case, to verify the organizational factors that lead to turnover intention among workers.

2 - Preliminary search with keywords: various combinations of keywords related to the theme of the present work were tested across a number of databases. Combining keywords that selected articles with titles demonstrably related to the present research was considered appropriate.

For the preliminary database research, keyword combinations of “turnover”, “intention”, “people”, “technology” and “management” were used. The English language was

adopted to ensure a greater range of articles; the final aggregated combination was “turnover”, “intention” and “people”. The Boolean operator “AND”, which identifies articles that necessarily contain the combinations of words that are separated by it, was also used.

Table 2 shows the initial keyword search combinations performed (step 2). This resulted in the final combinations that were defined for the present work (step 3).

Table 2

Initial keyword combinations

Data-base	Keywords	Search restrictions	Quantitative search result	Acceptance or not, and the reason
Scopus	<i>turnover AND technology</i>	Article title, abstract, keyword; open-access articles only; articles only.	843	No: the brief reading of the titles shows little relationship with the theme studied.
Science Direct	<i>turnover AND technology</i>	Article title, abstract, keyword; open-access articles only; articles only; Business Management and Accounting, Economics, Econometrics and Finance areas.	17.174	No: very high number of articles, and a brief reading of the titles shows little relationship with the theme.
Science Direct	<i>turnover AND people AND management</i>	Article title, abstract, keyword; open-access articles only; articles only.	3.971	No: very high number of articles, and a brief reading of the titles shows little relationship with the theme.
Scopus	<i>turnover AND people AND management</i>	Article title, abstract, keyword; open-access articles only; articles only.	174	No: a brief reading of the titles shows little relationship with the theme chosen.
Science Direct	<i>turnover AND intention AND people</i>	Articles with these terms; open-access articles only; articles only; article title, abstract keywords with turnover.	105	Yes: a brief reading of the titles shows a good fit with the theme.
Science Direct	<i>turnover AND intention AND people</i>	Articles with these terms; open-access articles only; articles only; article title with the word turnover.	35	No: a very small number of articles and there were articles that do not fit with the theme.
Scopus	<i>turnover AND intention AND people</i>	Open-access articles only; articles only.	73	Yes: a good number of articles for the study that, from a brief reading of the titles, fit with the chosen theme.

3 - Definition of keywords and databases: considering the last column of Table 2, the words turnover AND intention AND people were established for the search of the Science Direct and Scopus databases. The choice of databases considered the fact that both are from the

same publisher (Elsevier), which facilitates the subsequent stage of impact factor verification for calculating the *InOrdinatio* index. In addition, both are recognized as important databases within the area of Engineering III (Silva et al., 2021).

4 - Definitive database search: from the keywords and the databases defined in step 3, the option “articles only” was selected, so as not to include secondary work, such as books and reviews of the literature. Additionally, “Open-Access articles only” were selected, thereby excluding those where access would have necessitated payment.

5 - Filtering Procedure: the titles of all the articles were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet and duplicate articles and those that were not related to the research intent eliminated (Table 3).

Table 3

Stages of the filtering process

Filtering procedure	Result
Total articles (stage 4)	178
Total after the removal of duplicate articles (stage 5)	177
Total after removal of articles not related to the turnover research intent, established by reading the summaries of the articles that did not contain the word turnover in the title, or the summary or keywords established by the author (Step 5)	75
Total articles selected for the final analysis	75

6 - Identification of the impact factor, year of publication and number of citations: for each article selected in the previous step, the impact factor of the journal where each article was published was verified through the *SCImago Journal & Country Rank* (SJR), accessed through the website: //www.scimagojr.com/. The year of publication was verified in the article itself and the number of citations in the database from which the articles were drawn.

7 – Classification of the articles: equation 1 was used to calculate the *InOrdinatio* index for each article selected in stage 5.

$$InOrdinatio\ Equation = (IF/1000) + \alpha * [10 - (Research\ Year - Publish\ Year)] + (\sum CI) \quad (2)$$

In which:

IF = impact factor;

α = weighting factor, varying between 1 and 10, defined by the researcher in accordance with the relevance of the theme;

Research Year = year in which the research was developed;

Publish Year = year in which the article was published;

$\sum Ci$ = number of times the article was cited.

After obtaining the *InOrdinatio* index values, the cut-off points for the articles that would be fully read were defined, using a reference index greater than or equal to 100, i.e. the articles of step 5 that scored 100 points or more were selected to be completely read, and the data that generated the results presented in this work compiled.

For each of the 75 articles (step 5), the *InOrdinatio* index was calculated. The articles that obtained results ≥ 100 are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Methodi Ordinatio Results

	Article Titles, Authors and Journals	Citations; Year and IF	Result of the <i>InOrdinatio</i> equation
1	<i>Development of a Global Measure of Job Embeddedness and Integration into a Traditional Model of Voluntary Turnover.</i> Crossley C.D., Bennett R.J., Jex S.M., Burnfield J.L. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology.</i>	Citations: 406 Year: 2007 IF: 6.45	356.01
2	<i>Anxiety, distress, and turnover intention of healthcare workers in Peru by their distance to the epicenter during the COVID-19 crisis.</i> Yáñez J.A., Jahanshahi A.A., Alvarez-Risco A., Li J., Zhang S.X. <i>American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.</i>	Citations: 83 Year: 2020 IF: 1.01	163.00
3	<i>Empowering leadership: leading people to be present through affective organizational commitment?</i> Kim M., Beehr T.A. <i>International Journal of Human Resource Management</i>	Citations: 33 Year: 2020 IF: 1.54	113.00
4	<i>Is career adaptability a double-edged sword? The impact of work social support and career adaptability on turnover intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic.</i> Lee P.C., Xu S., Yang W. <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management.</i>	Citations: 15 Year: 2021 IF: 2.51	105.00
5	<i>LGBT Workplace Inequality in the Federal Workforce: Intersectional Processes, Organizational Contexts, and Turnover Considerations.</i> Cech E.A., Rothwell W.R. <i>ILR Review.</i>	Citations: 24 Year: 2020 IF: 2.40	104.00
6	<i>Employee stock ownership and firm exit decisions: A cross-country analysis of rank-and-file employees.</i> Hennig J.C., Ahrens C., Oehmichen J., Wolff M. <i>Accounting, Organizations and Society.</i>	Citations: 4 Year: 2022 IF: 2.20	104.00
7	<i>Influencing factors of Chinese special education teacher turnover intention: understanding the roles of subject well-being, social support, and work engagement.</i> Fu W., Pan Q., Zhang C., Cheng L. <i>International Journal of Developmental Disabilities.</i>	Citations: 4 Year: 2022 IF: 0.50	104.00
8	<i>When leader humility meets follower competitiveness: Relationships with follower affective trust, intended and voluntary turnover.</i> Liborius P., Kiewitz C. <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior.</i>	Citations: 3 Year: 2022 IF: 2.81	103.00
9	<i>Examining the linkages between employee brand love, affective commitment, positive word-of-mouth, and turnover intentions: A social identity theory perspective.</i> Mittal S., Gupta V., Motiani M. <i>IIMB Management Review.</i>	Citations: 3 Year: 2022 IF: 0.55	103.00
10	<i>Retention intention and job satisfaction of alternatively certified teachers in their first year of teaching.</i> Richter E., Lucksnat C., Redding C., Richter D. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education.</i>	Citations: 1 Year: 2022 IF: 1.95	101.00

11	<i>Turnover of IPS employment specialists: Rates and predictors.</i> Butenko D., Rinaldi M., Brinchmann B., Killackey E., Johnsen E., Mykletun A. <i>Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation.</i>	Citations: 1 Year: 2022 IF: 0.41	101.00
12	<i>The perceived overqualification's effect on innovative work behaviour: Do transformational leadership and turnover intention matter?</i> Kaymakçı R., Görener A., Toker K. <i>Current Research in Behavioral Sciences.</i>	Citations: 1 Year: 2022 IF: 0.00	101.00
13	<i>Employees' Entrepreneurial Dreams and Turnover Intention to Start-Up: The Moderating Role of Job Embeddedness.</i> Li M., Li J., Chen X. <i>International journal of environmental research and public health.</i>	Citations: 0 Year: 2022 IF: 0.81	100.00
14	<i>Factors related to care competence, workplace stress, and intention to stay among novice nurses during the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.</i> Chen H.M., Liu C.C., Yang S.Y., Wang Y.R., Hsieh P.L. <i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.</i>	Citations: 10 Year: 2021 IF: 0.81	100.00
15	<i>Exploring the relative importance of factors that influence the job retention of social care staff working in intellectual disability services.</i> Murray G.C., McKenzie K., Metcalfe D., Whelan K., Murray A.L. <i>British Journal of Learning Disabilities.</i>	Citations: 0 Year: 2022 IF: 0.47	100.00
16	<i>Turnover intention among operating room nurses during the COVID-19 outbreak and its association with perceived safety climate.</i> Lotfi M., Akhuleh O.Z., Judi A., Khodayari M. <i>Perioperative Care and Operating Room Management.</i>	Citations: 0 Year: 2022 IF: 0.18	100.00

8 – Location of the works, in full format: the articles selected for the systematic review were downloaded and saved for complete reading.

9 - Complete and systematic reading: the 16 selected articles were read in full and their data compared and compiled in the results section of the present work.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results, in terms of the factors that lead to turnover intention among employees and possible strategies to reduce turnover intention.

The factors affecting turnover intention found from the reading of the 16 articles are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Factors affecting turnover intention

Factors that determine turnover intention among employees	Article															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Lack of empowerment from the leaders			x	x	x			x								
Young professionals		x					x	x						x		
Lack of support in carrying out tasks				x			x			x	x					
Lack of effective commitment	x		x					x								
Lack of knowledge						x						x				x
Lack of perspective							x	x				x				
Lack of diversity in the workplace						x					x					
Precarious and unsafe workplace		x														x
Lack of support from colleagues				x												x
Lack of competencies														x		x
Lack of inclusion in decision making	x												x			
Stress														x		x
Unconstructive feedback					x											
Attractive opportunities within the jobs market							x									
Lack of identification with the company									x							
Extroversion										x						
Desire to open own business													x			

Table 6, outlines suggested action to reduce turnover intention within companies.

Table 6

Actions to reduce turnover

Actions to reduce turnover intention:	Article															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Strengthening social ties between a company and its employees' families (work parties, informal meetings)	x		x	x	x			x	x		x					x
Training and mastery programs			x	x	x			x						x		x
Involving workers in the decision-making						x	x		x	x			x			

processes of the company				
Amount of work adjusted to suit employees and time available	x		x x	x
Align expectations and clarity to that expected by employees			x x	x
Provide diversity in the workplace environment		x		x
Establish a career plan		x		x
Offer flexible working hours	x			

Given the data presented, it can be seen that the most important turnover intention factors are related to the lack of empowerment from leaders, lack of support to perform tasks and young professionals.

As Figueiredo et al. (2022) affirms, leadership is one of the important innovation generators for an organization, one which brings numerous positive aspects. Leaders who exercise transformational leadership and are agreeable, empathic, and attentive to their subordinates will gain their trust and respect, and with that be able to introduce innovative behavior.

Regarding the lack of support to perform tasks, companies that seek a competitive advantage by building a participatory culture, involving their employees in decision making, sharing sensitive company data, and delegating power, will see the most positive results, with empowered leaders and subordinates (Fombrun et al., 2000). While these factors are related to leader empowerment, they are equally the role of subordinates, monitoring development and improving employee performance through action that brings satisfaction at work (Özbağ & Çekmecelioğlu, 2022).

And finally, turnover intention among young professionals may be related to a lack of clarity regarding company values and the benefits companies offer employees. High-handed supervision may also increase employee turnover, mainly affecting young professionals, due to the fact that, since younger workers may be less dependent on income and more sensitive to aggressive supervision, they are more likely to leave their jobs when faced with such treatment from superiors (Tews & Stafford, 2020).

The main effective strategies for mitigating turnover intention, as presented in the articles sampled, notably include: strengthening social ties between the company and employees' families - promoted through events such as work parties and informal meetings; the implementation of training and mastery programs - identified as a significant means of retaining talent and mitigating the intention to leave; and the involvement of employees in the decision-making processes of companies - a crucial aspect which highlights the importance of active participation in the construction of an organizational environment. These findings emphasize the relevance of a holistic approach, one which goes beyond professional issues, seeking to strengthen social bonds and create a more engaging and satisfactory work environment.

5. CONCLUSION

The present work sought to comprehensively identify the organizational factors that lead to turnover intention among workers. Three main factors are highlighted, being: the lack of empowerment from leaders, the lack of support to perform tasks and the failure to meet the needs of young professionals. Other factors were also observed, such as the lack of affective commitment, recognition, perspective, diversity in the organization, training, support from colleagues, inclusion in decision making and positive identification with the company. In addition, precarious or insecure environments, stress, a desire to open one's own business, extroversion, an external jobs market offering favorable opportunities and unconstructive feedback are considered factors.

It can be seen from the results found that, even across different sectors and areas, the major cause of turnover intention in organizations relates to work satisfaction: critically, a lack of leader empowerment and inadequate support when performing tasks.

It is hoped that the present article contributes to the knowledge base addressing the main factors that influence intention to change employment, in order to direct efforts towards those elements that favor the retention of talents in companies.

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