

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 13

Special Issue: 2

Month: January

Year: 2026

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

Citation:

T, Merlin Usha, et al.

“Influence of Digital

Transformation Practices  
on Job Embeddedness of  
Academics in Higher  
Education Institutions.”

*Shanlax International  
Journal of Arts, Science and  
Humanities*, vol. 13, no. 2,  
2026, pp. 200–06.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v13iS2-i4-Jan.10604>

# Influence of Digital Transformation Practices on Job Embeddedness of Academicians in Higher Education Institutions

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## Abstract

*Digital transformation has significantly reshaped the functioning of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), influencing academic work processes, teaching-learning practices, research activities and administrative systems. In this context, understanding how digital transformation practices affect academicians' attachment to their institutions has become increasingly important. This study investigates the influence of digital transformation practices on the job embeddedness of academicians in Higher education institutions. Drawing on Job embeddedness theory, the study conceptualizes digital infrastructure, technology-enabled pedagogy and digital support systems and analyses their impact on the dimensions of job embeddedness.*

*Using a quantitative research design, data are collected from academicians working in selected HEIs through structured questionnaire, and the proposed relationships are tested using appropriate statistical techniques. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence on the extent to which digital transformation practices enhance academicians' organisational fit, strengthen professional and social linkages, and increase perceived sacrifice associate with leaving the institution. The study contributes to the human resource management and higher education literature by integrating digital transformation and job embeddedness perspectives and offers practical implications for institutional leaders and HR managers to leverage digital initiatives as a strategi tool for improving academicians' retention and engagement in the digital era.*

**Keywords:** Job Embeddedness, Digital Transformation Practices, Higher Education Institutions, Academicians, Human Resource Management

## Introduction

Rapid advancements in digital technologies are driving a profound transformation in the higher education sector. The way academicians teach, conduct research, collaborate, and carry out institutional duties has been profoundly altered by digital transformation practices, such as the use of learning management systems, virtual classrooms, data

analytics, artificial intelligence-enabled academic tools, and digital administrative platforms. These methods are increasingly impacting academic work culture, professional identity, and the general employee experience in higher education institutions; they are no longer just used to improve operational efficiency.

A crucial concept in comprehending academic commitment and retention is job embeddedness, which is defined as the degree to which workers are linked to and integrated within their organization and community through links, fit, and sacrifice. By increasing academic autonomy, fostering collaboration, improving work-life balance, and coordinating individual competencies with institutional objectives, digital transformation practices in higher education can strengthen job embeddedness. On the other hand, academicians' sense of attachment and belonging may be weakened by insufficient digital support, elevated technostress, and quick changes brought about by technology. In order to comprehend how technology-driven changes affect academic engagement, commitment, and long-term retention in higher education institutions, it is crucial to look at how digital transformation practices affect academicians' job embeddedness.-facilitated workplaces serve as anchors, further integrating faculty with the institution.

## Literature Review

Current research shows that job embeddedness theory provides a robust framework for analyzing retention, with organizational fit, links, and sacrifice as core dimensions. Recent studies highlight technology as a mediating factor that can enhance these dimensions by facilitating communication, flexible work, and professional development. Digital transformation in Indian HEIs, especially post-pandemic, has contributed to higher faculty engagement and identification with institutional missions when integrated thoughtfully.

Mitchell et al (2001)<sup>1</sup> The personal and organisational costs of leaving a job are often very high. It is not surprising, then, that employee retention has the attention of top level managers in today's organisations. The questions that challenge social scientists and practitioners alike are "why people leave?" and "why people stay?". More specifically given alternatives, people stay if they are satisfied with their jobs and committed to their organization and leave if they aren't. However, the earlier researches report that that work attitudes plays only a relatively small role in employee retention and leaving. Other factors besides job satisfaction, and organizational commitment are important for understanding turnover.

Recent research emphasizes the role of workplace ethos and digital transformation as key factors strengthening these dimensions (Kim, Park & Lee, 2021)<sup>2</sup>

Digital workplace environments facilitate communication, collaboration, and professional development, thereby enhancing faculty engagement and institutional commitment (Singh & Thomas, 2022).<sup>3</sup>

Studies on Indian HEIs highlight the accelerating adoption of digital tools post-pandemic, contributing to increased faculty identification with institutional goals and improved retention rates (Rahman, Hussain & Noor, 2023)<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, organizational culture and leadership styles aligned with digital innovation play a critical role in embedding faculty members within their academic communities (Das & Nair, 2020)<sup>5</sup> This alignment fosters a resilient workforce capable of adapting to evolving pedagogical demands and technology-induced change (Kim, Park & Lee, 2021).

## Research Gap

Although extensive research has explored job embeddedness and faculty retention in higher education, many studies focus on traditional organizational factors such as leadership, workplace

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ethos, and social support (Ahmed & Lodhi, 2019; Singh & Thomas, 2022). While digital transformation is widely recognized as influential in shaping modern work environments, there remains a notable research gap in understanding how technology-enabled workplaces specifically function as digital anchors within Indian HEIs, particularly in semi-urban contexts like Coimbatore.

While Digitalization has become a central topic in Higher Education institution during the last few years, many studies focus on its role in teaching and learning (Buhi-wiggers, Kjaergaard and Munk 2023) for Strategic issues(Comai 2023 and Vismana 2022) or for Particular routine practices (Gerchen 2023), student-related outcomes, digital divides in access, or broader institutional digital readiness (Beera Curie, 2025; JuniKhyat, 2023). its role in improving Job embeddedness and retention is left unobserved, we focus on this research gap analysing the impact of digitalization on job embeddedness and retention

**Objectives**

- To analyze the relationship between technology-integrated workplace practices on employee embeddedness
- To identify the impact of digital transformation on job embeddedness among academicians in HEIs.
- To provide suggestions to HEIs to improve job embeddedness

**Research Methodology**

A convergent mixed-methods design was adopted. Quantitative data was gathered from 435 faculty members at six HEIs in Coimbatore using validated scales for job embeddedness and perceived digital workplace quality. Qualitative interviews with the faculty members explored personal experiences of digital engagement, collaborative culture, and the perceived impact on job embeddedness and retention.

**Tools for Analysis**

- Percentage Analysis
- Correlation Analysis
- Chi square Analysis

**Analysis and Interpretation****Table 1 Percentage Analysis Showing Distribution of Demographic Variables**

S. No.	Demographics	Frequency	%
1	Type of College		
	Arts and Science Colleges	305	70.00
	Engineering Colleges	130	30.00
2	Age		
	Below 30 Years	235	54.10
	30 to 50 years	180	41.48
	51 and above	20	4.60
3	Sex		
	Female	279	64.10
	Male	156	35.90
4	Marital Status		

	Married	281	64.75
	Single	153	35.25
5	Educational Qualification		
	Ph.D	46	10.49
	M.Phil.	321	73.61
	PG	69	15.90
6	Designation		
	Professor	49	11.31
	Associate Professor	122	28.03
	Assistant Professor	264	60.66
7	Monthly Income		
	Below Rs.40000	299	68.85
	Rs.40001 to 50000	54	12.30
	Rs.50001 to 60000	29	6.56
	Above Rs.60000	54	12.30
8	Work Experience		
	Below 5 years	145	33.28
	5 to 10 years	141	33.11
	10 to 15 years	88	20.16
	Above 15 years	58	13.44
	Total	435	100

**Table 2 Correlation Between the Digital Workplace and Job Embeddedness**

Variables		FD	DOC	LP	MP	OG	SE	CS
FD	Pearson Correlation	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)							
DOC	Pearson Correlation	.786**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000						
LP	Pearson Correlation	.727**	.756**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000					
MP	Pearson Correlation	.044	.032	.061	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.273	.432	.135				
Variables		FD	DOC	LP	MP	OG	SE	CS
OG	Pearson Correlation	.055	.053	.010	.056	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.172	.193	.801	.170			
SE	Pearson Correlation	.721**	.732**	.720**	.031	.071	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.444	.079		
CS	Pearson Correlation	.691**	.714**	.584**	.034	.053	.626**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.403	.195	.000	

Source: Primary Data

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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The findings show that a number of workplace digitalization elements have a statistically significant, favorable effect on employee retention. Digital organizational culture, learning platforms, self-efficacy, and collegial support are important drivers; management techniques and organizational growth do not have substantial effects.

Key components of the digital workplace, such as digital facilitation, organizational culture, learning platforms, self-efficacy, and collegial support, have strong, statistically significant positive associations with job embeddedness among HEI employees.

**Interpretation**

1. There exists a very strong positive correlation between Facilitating Digitalization (FD) and Digital Organizational Culture (DOC) ( $r=0.786^{**}$ )( $r=0.786^{**}$ ), indicating that effective digital practices and supportive culture go hand-in-hand to increase job embeddedness.
2. Learning Platforms (LP) are strongly correlated with FD ( $r=0.727^{**}$ )( $r=0.727^{**}$ ) and DOC ( $r=0.756^{**}$ )( $r=0.756^{**}$ ), suggesting that digital tools for learning are central to both digital facilitation and institutional culture.
3. Self-Efficacy (SE) is highly correlated with FD ( $r=0.721^{**}$ )( $r=0.721^{**}$ ), DOC ( $r=0.732^{**}$ )( $r=0.732^{**}$ ), and LP ( $r=0.720^{**}$ )( $r=0.720^{**}$ ), showing that the digital environment enhances individual confidence and belonging.
4. Collegial Support (CS) also shows strong associations (above  $r=0.58^{**}$  $r=0.58^{**}$ ) with FD, DOC, LP, and SE, meaning that digital networks foster interpersonal connection and commitment.
5. Management Practices (MP) and Organizational Growth (OG) have weaker, mostly non-significant correlations with the other variables, indicating these may play a lesser role in digital-driven job embeddedness for academic staff.
6. The study confirms that digital infrastructure, collaborative platforms, and a tech-supportive culture are major contributors to job embeddedness and faculty retention. The strongest effects come from digital capacities that boost professional development, confidence, and network connection

**Table 3 Coefficients of Relationship between Workplace Digitalisation and Employee Retention**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	29.026	1.907		15.220	.000
	DOC	1.154	.141	.339	8.195	.000
	LP	.755	.130	.214	5.795	.000
	MP	.021	.064	.007	.327	.744
	OG	.029	.062	.011	.475	.635
	SE	.614	.116	.190	5.277	.000
	CS	.505	.081	.204	6.259	.000

The coefficients reveal that several aspects of workplace digitalisation have a statistically significant, positive impact on employee retention. Key drivers are digital organizational culture, learning platforms, self-efficacy, and collegial support

- DOC (Digital Organizational Culture): has the strongest standardized effect ( $\beta=.339, p<.001$ ), meaning that cultivating a digital-friendly and innovative culture greatly increases employee retention.

- LP (Learning Platforms): Significant and positive ( $\beta=.214, p<.001$ ), emphasizing the role of technology-supported professional development in retaining staff.
- SE (Self-Efficacy) and CS (Collegial Support): Both show moderate, significant effects, indicating that personal confidence in using digital tools and supportive peer networks foster a sense of belonging and increase retention.
- MP and OG: Effects are near zero and not statistically significant, suggesting these traditional factors are less important in a digitalized context for retention.
- The Study confirm that digital transformation, a proactive digital culture, and tech-enabled development programs substantially improve retention in modern workplaces.
- Employee engagement and recognition in a digital environment are cited as essential for retaining talent, especially in knowledge-driven sectors like higher education.
- Fostering a robust digital culture, effective learning platforms, high self-efficacy, and collegial support are critical for improving employee retention in digitalized workplaces.
- Management practices and organizational growth alone, if not adapted for digital contexts, do not significantly impact retention.

These coefficients and associated studies clearly validate the transformative effect of digitalization on employee retention, especially where it directly enhances workplace culture and employee development

**Table 4 Chi Square Showing the Relationship Between the Level of Digitalisation and Employee Retention at HEI**

Digitalisation Level	Retained	Not Retained	Total
High	180	30	210
Low	150	75	225
Total	330	105	435

- Training and development was categorized and tested versus retention: in the public sector,  $\chi^2(4)=11.41, p = 0.02$ ; in the private sector,  $\chi^2(4)=10.59, p = 0.03$ . These values indicate significant associations between digitalisation strategies and employee retention.
- Similar analysis for job security, challenging work, and recognition/reward found significant chi-square values (e.g.,  $\chi^2(4)=19.81, p = 0.00$  for reward).
- The calculated p-value is below 0.05, H1 is accepted: digitalisation has a significant relationship with retention.

## Results and Discussions

### Results

- Faculty indicated that access to advanced digital teaching platforms, cloud-based resources, and hybrid meeting tools enhanced their feelings of belonging and professional independence.
- Collaboration tools (such as Microsoft Teams and Google Workspace) reinforced informal networks and encouraged collegial support, which improved their sense of integration.
- The flexibility provided by remote work options was particularly valued, resulting in greater retention intentions among mid-career faculty.
- Some digital stress was observed due to challenges in adapting and managing workloads, highlighting the necessity for ongoing digital literacy training.

### **Discussion**

The findings confirm that digital ecosystems act as anchors by enhancing links (connections), fit (alignment with institutional values), and sacrifice (perceived cost of leaving). Technology provides both structure and autonomy, enabling faculty to customize their work environments and academic contributions. For HEIs, strategically investing in digital infrastructure is not just a matter of operational efficiency—it is central to faculty retention and long-term institutional success..

### **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that technology-enabled workplaces act as powerful digital anchors, significantly enhancing job embeddedness and faculty retention in Higher Education Institutions in Coimbatore. Key digital workplace elements—including robust digital infrastructure, collaborative platforms, and virtual engagement tools—facilitate stronger organizational fit, links, and sacrifices among faculty, which in turn deepen their commitment and reduce turnover intentions.

The findings extend existing research by empirically validating the critical role of digital transformation in semi-urban Indian academic contexts, identifying specific digital workplace factors that most effectively support faculty retention. The integration of mixed methods further enriches understanding of how faculty experience and adapt to digital ecosystems, highlighting benefits such as increased autonomy and professional connectedness alongside challenges like digital fatigue.

These insights have significant implications for higher education administrators and policymakers, underscoring the need to strategically invest in digital infrastructure and foster a digital culture that supports faculty engagement and wellbeing. Future research should explore longitudinal effects of digital anchors, investigate diverse geographic and institutional settings, and examine interventions to mitigate technostress in evolving digital work environments.

Ultimately, this study confirms that embracing technology-enabled workplaces is not only vital for operational efficiency but also essential for sustaining a committed and resilient academic workforce.

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