

Impact of Work Related Attitudes on Turnover Intention

Archana Shukla, R. Srinivasan & Swati Chaurasia

The paper aims to establish a relationship between various work-related attitudes and turnover intention of employees in Indian context. The study adopted a survey based research design and analyzed a sample of 158 middle and senior management employees from four Indian firms. Intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment are negatively and significantly associated with turnover intention of employees. Age and gender have a negative and positive effect, respectively, on turnover intention of Indian employees. Work-related attitudes differ in different contexts and thus have varying effect on turnover intention.

Archana Shukla (E-mail – archana@iiml.ac.in) & **Swati Chaurasia** (E-mail –swati@iiml.ac.in) are from Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow. **R. Srinivasan** (E-mail - srini@iimb.ernet.in) is from Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore

Introduction

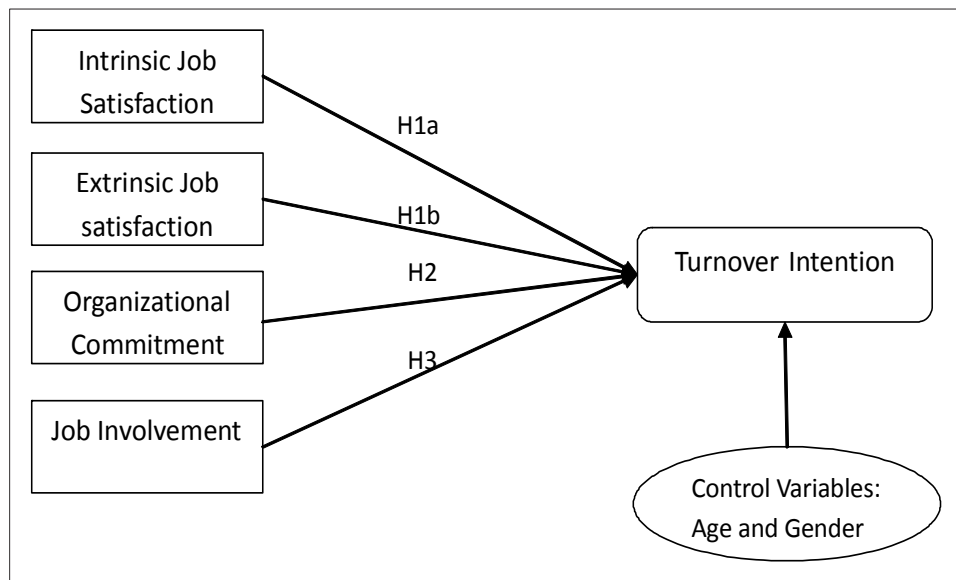
Extant studies have examined the extent in which the organizational commitments of professionals are linked to attitudes and affective reactions to the work environment and behavioral intentions such as intention to leave or actual turnover (Wilensky, 1965; Sorensen & Sorensen, 1974). Researchers have further argued that there is high cost associated with managerial failure to retain a body of well educated, effective employees (Cascio, 1991; Mirvis & Lawlwer, 1997). Sjoberg & Sverke (2000) find relationship between involvement, commitment and its interaction leading to turnover intentions which lead to turnover. Focusing on the work related attitudes such as job involvement (Kanungo, 1979), organizational commitment (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979), work involvement, job satisfaction as predictors of turnover, recent studies have called for a closer examination of the generality of withdrawal processes and their differentiation according to relevant work attitudes (e.g. Mowday, Koberg & McArthur, 1984).

Therefore, the basic premise of this paper is that identification of work related behavior either with the job or the

organization will make employee less inclined to leave the job. Among professionals, this work related behavior is such a contingency factor, which despite its relevance, has not been closely examined. Attitude of professionals has frequently been suggested as an important determinant of the incongruence between turnover intention, and many studies have stressed the importance of understanding the antecedents of the same (Miller, 1967; Hall, 1968; Brief & Aldag, 1976; Tuma & Grimes, 1981). However, only a few studies have studied the above gap empirically, and much lesser in the context of developing nations (Sorensen & Sorensen, 1974; Tuma & Grimes 1981; Aranya et al., 1986). India is characterized by high power-distance values and a collectivistic culture (Hofstede, 1988;1991; Routamaa & Hautala, 2008) and Indian

manager's mind set includes submissive, prone to emotional and personal dependence, fatalism, in-group/clan orientation, status/hierarchy/power consciousness, materialism and holistic orientation (Amba-Rao et al, 2000; Garg & Parikh, 1986; Pradhan, Mishra & Mathur, 2001; Sinha & Kanungo, 1997; Sinha & Pandey, 2007). Furthermore, societal context, cultural diversity and political factors affect interpersonal relations (Cooke & Saini, 2010; Ramaswami & Dreher, 2010; Baruch & Budhwar, 2006; Bhawuk, 2008; Budhwar & Khatri, 2001), which may influence individual's attitudes. Thus, the purpose of the present study is to construct from the available literature a path model which will reflect the work related attitudes and behaviors affecting intention to quit for the employee in the Indian context and test the same (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Conceptual Model of Work Attitudes & Turnover Intention



Extant research suggests that attitudes towards the organization are more strongly related than attitudes toward the job to turnover intentions. Several authors (Peters, Bhagat & O'Connor, 1981; Shore & Martin, 1989; Williams & Hazer, 1986) reported organizational commitment had a stronger relationship with turnover intentions than did job satisfaction. Research also shows that organizational attitudes alone are related to turnover intentions (e.g. Angle & Perry, 1981; Mowday et al., 1979; Steers, 1977). In addition, a number of studies have shown a relationship between turnover intentions and overall job satisfaction (e.g. Angle & Perry, 1981; Mossholder, Bedeian & Armenakis, 1981). Perhaps job satisfaction is related to turnover intentions because of the high correlation between job and organizational attitudes (Angle & Perry, 1981; Mowday et al., 1979). Steel & Ovalle (1984) have discussed behavioral intentions and its expanding role in the field of turnover research. Their findings from the meta-analysis include four correlates of employee turnover: behavioral intentions, overall job satisfaction, work satisfaction and organizational commitment. In this study we take the turnover intentions as a dependent variable instead of turnover because we relate work related attitudes rather than exact reasons for turnover.

Job satisfaction results in reduced intentions to quit.

The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention has been stud-

ied extensively in the literature, and results generally show that job satisfaction results in reduced intentions to quit (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). Researchers have also analyzed job satisfaction as intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. For instance, Tett & Meyer (1993) conducted a meta-analysis that included 178 samples from 155 related studies, and their findings suggested that intrinsic job satisfaction is negatively associated with turnover intentions. Previous work also indicates that while intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention are often highly interrelated (Dailey & Kirk, 1992; Herndon et al., 2001; Koh & Boo, 2001) and these two job satisfaction factors will often predict turnover intentions much more effectively than work commitment (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Other studies have identified a negative relationship between intrinsic & extrinsic jobsatisfaction and turnover intention within different organizational contexts. In a sales study exploring the impact of ethical climate on various role stress, attitudinal, and performance factors, Jaramillo et al. (2006) concluded that intrinsic job satisfaction was associated with decreased intentions to leave a company. Jones et al. (1996) also determined that extrinsic job satisfaction was negatively related to sales professionals' likelihood of quitting in a broader study of leadership and job attitudes in the sales environment. Egan et al. (2004) concluded that information technology professionals' reduced turnover intentions were result of both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction along with corporate culture that focused on learning.

These arguments suggest that individuals who report increased intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction with their jobs will report significantly lower levels of intentions to leave their jobs as summarized in the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: There will be a significant negative relationship between intrinsic job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Hypothesis 1b: There will be a significant negative relationship between extrinsic job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Organizational Commitment & Turnover Intentions

Organizational commitment is an attitudinal variable indicating the amount of loyalty and support an employee feels for an organization. Meyer & Allen (1991) proposed a three component model including affective, continuance, and normative commitment; all of which are thought to contribute to employee retention. Affective commitment “refers to the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” (employees stay with a firm because they want to); continuance commitment “refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization” (employees stay with a firm because they need to); and normative commitment “reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment” (employees stay with a firm because they ought to). In this paper, organizational commitment is defined as

the extent to which employees are involved with and have emotional attachment to their organizations because they identify with the goals and values of their organization (Porter et al., 1974). Organizational commitment is commonly used in management, marketing, psychology and other disciplines as an antecedent to job involvement, turnover intention, organizational alternatives, and organizational citizenship behavior (Lacity & Iyer, 2008). Lack of organizational commitment has detrimental effects such as increase in turnover rate and turnover intentions; Lack of organizational commitment has detrimental effects such as increase in turnover rate and turnover intentions; poorer performance affecting organizational efficiency and effectiveness negatively (Lum et al., 1998; Becker et al., 1996; Cohen & Hudacek, 1998; Kuean et al., 2010). Previous studies have confirmed that organizational commitment is negatively correlated to turnover intentions (Addae & Parboteeah, 2008). Vandenberghe et al., (2004) found that organizational commitment had an indirect effect on turnover through intent to quit. As evident by several analyses, this shows that organizational commitment is negatively correlated with turnover intentions (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Some research does not provide evidence for the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intentions (Lacity & Iyer, 2008). In summary, prior research yields mixed results, but generally findings suggest that organizational commitment negatively affects voluntary turnover intention. Thus, we hypothesize:

Lack of organizational commitment has detrimental effects such as increase in turnover rate and turnover intentions; poorer performance affecting organizational efficiency and effectiveness negatively.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant negative relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention.

Job Involvement & Turnover Intention

According to literature, job involvement is a construct that arises out of interactions between individual disparities of sensitivity about the work settings and personality traits (Ruh et al, 1975; Scbein, 1983). According to Lodahl & Kejner (1965), job involvement affects people for whom his or her job constitutes the most important portion of life. Thus, job involvement can be conceptualized as “the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with his work or the importance of work in his total self image” (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965). Hence, job involvement appears to be a construct that follows directly from the way individuals are affected by their immediate work environment and interpersonal relationships (Ruh et al, 1975). Furthermore, highly involved employees would consider their job a large part of their identity and thus have lower intentions to quit. Job involvement would seem to be heightened by perceived support. However, empirical evidence for a relationship between job involvement and turnover intention is lack-

ing. An employee’s belief that the organization values his or her work may encourage one to reduce the intensity to quit his/her job (Eisenberger et al., 1990). Thus we hypothesize:

An employee’s belief that the organization values his or her work may encourage one to reduce the intensity to quit his/her job.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant negative relationship between job involvement and turnover intention.

Methods

Our study was conducted on a sample of middle management managers from four Indian firms – a nationalized bank (NF), a nationalized power sector firm (PF), a MNC software firm (SF) and a private Indian manufacturing firm (MF). A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 500 managers and 158 usable responses were received (31.6% response rate). This rate is around the modal range of response rates for mail questionnaires (Green & Tull, 1975). In the sample, 21% of respondents were employed in NF, 24% in PF, 27% in SF and 28% in MF. Furthermore, the sample consisted of 79% males and 21% females. The average age of respondents was 29 years.

We use a latent variable structural equation modeling (SEM) approach on the sample of 158 responses. We chose an SEM approach as it is a powerful generalization of earlier statistical ap-

proaches with the key virtue of having a less restrictive assumption of measurement error (Goerzen, 2007). In contrast to OLS regression, for example, which is based on the assumption that variables are measured perfectly, SEMs are based on the assumption that each explanatory and dependent variable is associated with measurement error (Bollen, 1989). In addition, SEMs allow for multiple indicators of latent variables, which are a more realistic representation of the variables under study (Fig. 1).

Latent Variables

Turnover intention (3-items) and organization commitment (4-items) were both measured by scales adopted from Sjöberg & Sverke (2000). These are commonly used and highly validated scales. We measured intrinsic (7-items) and extrinsic (8-items) job satisfaction by using a scale adapted from Warr, Cook & Wall (1979). We measured job involvement (10-items) by adapting the scale of Kanungo (1982). All items for the latent variables were statements to which subjects had to respond on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). The wordings of six items were reversed in an attempt to reduce response set bias. A measure of overall latent measures for each respondent was derived by taking the mean score across all items. Age and gender of the respondent was dummy coded (1 for >30yrs age else 0; 1 for males and 0 for females) and were taken as control variables. Since the latent variable measures were built in a similar way and contained items with similar word-

ing, a common method variance effect may occur. The findings (Table 1), however, suggest that, at best, it may be a very small effect. Such variations would not have happened if these correlations were the results of common method variance.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics, correlation matrix and model fit measures are given in Table 1. The majority of within-construct correlations are low to moderate as required by SEMs and thus provide an evidence of good separation between the latent variables. The figures in Table 1 also indicate satisfactory convergent validities of the latent variables. These are indications that the constructs are convergent and uni-dimensional and that there exists, as a result, good construct validity.

Model Test & Path Analysis

The traditional measure of model fit is the χ^2 value and its associated confidence level; it has long been observed, however, that this measure is excessively conservative and is biased against large samples (Bollen, 1989; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1981). While no consensus exists on the sufficiency of a single index to define model quality, there are a great many indicators available that are considered, when several are used together, to be an accurate reflection of overall model fit (Bollen, 1989; Kaplan, 2000). Therefore, several disparate indices were used, as suggested by Tanaka (1993) to converge on an overall assessment, including the Root Mean Squared Error of

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics, Correlation, Reliability, Validity, and Model Fit

| | mean | S.D. | Turnover Intention | Intrinsic Job Satisfaction | Extrinsic Job Satisfaction | Organizational Commitment | job Involvement |
|--|------|-------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Turnover Intention | 2.5 | 0.936 | (0.83) | | | | |
| Intrinsic job Satisfaction | 3.53 | 0.649 | -.458** | (0.84) | | | |
| Extrinsic job Satisfaction | 3.75 | 0.585 | -.448** | .680** | (0.83) | | |
| Organizational Commitment | 3.63 | 0.665 | -.406** | .525** | .564** | (0.74) | |
| Job Involvement | 3.21 | 0.48 | -.209** | ..243** | .289** | .449** | (0.68) |
| MODEL FIT MEASURES | | | | | | | |
| Degrees of Freedom | | | 653.86 | | | | |
| χ^2 | | | 424 | | | | |
| Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation | | | 0.059 | | | | |
| Normed Fit Index | | | 0.92 | | | | |
| Comparative Fit Index | | | 0.93 | | | | |
| Incremental Fit Index | | | 0.93 | | | | |
| Goodness-of-Fit Index | | | 0.91 | | | | |
| Root Mean Square Residual | | | 0.04 | | | | |

Approximation (RMSEA) as discussed by Steiger (1990), Non-Normed Fit Index (Bentler & Bonett, 1980), Incremental Fit Index (Bollen, 1989), Comparative Fit Index (Bentler, 1990), and Goodness-of-Fit Index (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1981). As summarized in Table 1, the hypothesized model holds up well when tested against the sample of 158 respondents. While the χ^2 value of 653.86 is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) with 424 degrees of freedom, the RMSEA is 0.059, suggesting a very good fit, given that it is well below the critical threshold of 0.08 as suggested by Browne & Cudeck (1989). Further, the Normed Fit Index, Comparative Fit Index, Incremental Fit Index, and Goodness-of-Fit Index are all between 0.91 and 0.93 (0.90 is usually

considered the hurdle) and Root Mean Square Residual is less than 0.04, suggesting that the research model fits the observed data very well. As a further robustness check of the model, the residual matrixes as well as the path and error covariance modification indices were examined to see whether simple alterations could be made to improve the model without threatening its theoretical integrity. An examination of these indices indicated that there are no changes that would significantly improve model fit. Once the fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data is found to be acceptable, as shown above, individual paths can then be interpreted to evaluate the strength and significance of these relationships as discussed in detail below.

As shown in Table 2, the structural path from intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction to turnover intention is negative and statistically significant ($\gamma = -0.25, p < 0.05$; $\gamma = -0.14, p < 0.05$). This result provides support for hypotheses 1a and 1b. Further, while organizational commitment has a negative and significant association with turnover intention ($\gamma = -0.052, p < 0.1$), the associated path is a bit lower than intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. Finally, job involvement have negative and non-significant association with turnover intention ($\gamma = -0.041, p < 0.1$).

Discussion & Conclusion

The theoretical model of this study incorporated a set of hypotheses about the direction of effects of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job involvement on intentions to leave in developing nation context. These assumptions were

Table 2 Structural Model: Parameter Estimates

| | Estimated Coefficient | Error | P-Value |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------|---------|
| Intrinsic job Satisfaction | -0.25 | 0.24 | <0.05 |
| Extrinsic Job Satisfaction | -0.14 | 0.18 | <0.05 |
| Organizational Commitment | -0.052 | 0.23 | <0.1 |
| Job Involvement | -0.041 | 0.15 | <0.1 |
| Age | -0.11 | 0.018 | <0.05 |
| Gender | 0.2 | 0.067 | <0.05 |
| R Square | 0.19 | | |

examined by path analyses which make possible the assessment of direct and indirect effects formulated in the model. The findings here suggest that the theory ought

to consider and propose different relations between the work attitudes and turnover intentions in different contexts. They show that the prevalent assumptions about work attitudes and turnover intention fit for the professionals in a developed nation setting but not in developing nation context. As mentioned earlier, the relationships between work attitudes and turnover intention have long been a subject of debate. Support can be found in previous research both for the independence of these attitudes (e.g. Greene, 1978; Sorensen & Sorensen, 1974) and for their being inter-related (Bartol, 1979; Fiango & Brumbaugh, 1974). Rather than view these assumptions as contradictory, the results suggest that these attitudes can be perceived as related under some conditions and unrelated under others, and that one such condition may be the developing nation context. The differences in relations between the work attitudes and intention to quit may result from the differences in the encouragement of professional values and behavior provided in the different national contexts. This perspective should also be more extensively studied in different other contexts. With regard to intent to leave, the difference from developed nation context is found between the job satisfaction and job involvement with turnover intentions in developing nation context. While an association between job satisfaction and turnover intention has been found in studies of professionals (e.g. Price & Mueller, 1981; Sorensen & Sorensen, 1974), the effect of job involvement and organizational commitment on turnover intention, has not been closely examined. The results here indicate that job satisfaction directly affect

and lessen the intentions to leave in Indian context. This finding is counter to the Porter et al. (1974) proposition that organizational commitment is a better predictor of intention to leave than is job satisfaction. It seems, therefore, that professionals may not stick to a dissatisfying job. Although commitment to the organization has been studied to be one of the better attitudinal predictors of the intent to leave, the results in our study indicate that organizational commitment have only a weak effect on this intention. It should be mentioned that the demographic variables – age and gender - were examined in this research as possible predictors (controls) of turnover intentions and were found to have negative effect for age and positive effect for gender on turnover intentions.

The results of this study have some interesting implications. Work attitudes may differ in different contexts and thus may have varying effect on turnover intention. There may be a need for theoretical as well as empirical adjustments in studying turnover intentions in varying contexts. The context may introduce a contingency perspective to the relationship between work attitudes and intention to quit. Overlooking such contingencies may blur the differences which are important for our understanding of professionals' attitudes in developing nations, as well as, for the practical implications and management policies derived from the theory. In order to further our understanding of professionals' work reactions future theory and research should focus on differences of structural properties in organizations in developing nations. This may also prove

to have implications for the assumption of conflicting attitudes with developed nations. It is suggested that rather than assuming conflict, a contingency relation should be assumed. Organizational context and professionals' work attitudes may be directly related under some conditions and unrelated under others.

The results here indicate that job satisfaction directly affect and lessen the intentions to leave in Indian context.

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