

A STUDY ON ROLE OF THE JOB BURNOUT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED INSTRUMENTAL CLIMATE AND TURNOVER INTENTION*

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to investigate the relationship between perceived instrumental climate, job burnout and turnover intention. We hypothesize that perceived instrumental climate leads to turnover intention and this relationship is strengthened by job burnout. To test our model, an online survey is conducted among 226 employees from Kosovo using convenience sampling. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to test the validity of the constructs and after deleting some items, the validity condition was provided. Reliability test showed that the three constructs were reliable at high degree. Using path analysis, it was found that perceived instrumental climate is positively associated with emotional exhaustion and emotional exhaustion is positively associated with turnover intention. However, this study failed to confirm the moderating role of emotional exhaustion on the relationship between perceived instrumental climate and turnover intention. This study is limited to the current variables and other behavioral variables are not included in the model. Furthermore, the findings of this study are limited only to the sample employed for this purpose and cannot be generalized from a broader perspective. At the same time, the survey was conducted in the pandemic time, where the three job attitude variables may be different from the normal situation. We recommend that job burnout acts as mediating variable in this relationship and future studies can make efforts to describe this relationship.

Keywords: Perceived Instrumental Climate, Job Burnout, Turnover Intention

Jel Classification: M00, M50, M59

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INTRODUCTION

Psychological ethical climate dimensions, such as organisation's care, regulations and independence have a positive effect on satisfaction, but the instrumental organizational climate is negatively linked with job satisfaction (Wang & Hsieh, 2012: 542). Employees who perceive an instrumental climate see their organization as containing rules and expectations that promote decision making from an egocentric perspective (Goldman & Tabak, 2010: 234). Meanwhile, the concept of burnout describes a phenomenon observed among employees who deal with emotionally demanding individuals (Kim & Stoner, 2008: 7). The burnout is considered as a psychological process – a sequence of attitudinal and emotional reactions by which an employee encounters him/herself as a result of experiences related to the job and personal life (Jackson & Schuler, 1983: 59). High levels of burnout lead to various undesired work-related outcomes, varying from decreased job satisfaction to personal health deterioration (Gabris & Ihrke, 2001: 157). Among negative behaviors, the intention to quit is a common outcome. Intention to quit is heavily enhanced by job dissatisfaction, lack of organizational commitment, and stress (Firth, et al., 2004: 181). Accordingly, the effect of job burnout on turnover intention is positive and significant (Kalliath & Beck, 2001: 75). Thus, job outcomes are often influenced by the psychological climate in the organization (Schwepker, 2013: 398). Therefore, it is expected that the instrumental ethical climate will be positively correlated to negative outcomes.

This paper aims to investigate the relationship between perceived instrumental climate, job burnout, and turnover intention. More specifically, we try to examine the relationship between perceived instrumental climate and turnover intention moderated by the emotional exhaustion, as the first component of job

burnout. As the positive link between ethical climate and job satisfaction has been argued in the literature, the instrumental climate is expected to have a positive effect on turnover intention. We hold that this relationship will be moderated by emotional exhaustion, which already has a positive and strong effect on turnover intention. The motive for this study lays on that the perceived instrumental climate is less discussed in the literature and this component has a detrimental nature comparing with the other four ethical climates, which have a positive direction on job outcomes. As such, the outcomes of the perceived instrumental climate have not been investigated in previous studies. With the assumption that the other four ethical climate dimensions will have a negative impact on turnover intention, we build on our hypothesized model as in Figure 1 that the effect of the perceived instrumental climate on the turnover intention will be strengthened by emotional exhaustion.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Perceived Instrumental Climate

The perceived instrumental climate is a component of the organizational ethical climate. Organizations create a "climate" which promotes honesty or dishonesty that permeates every level of the organization (Kamp & Brooks, 1991: 449). Organizational climate is considered as an organizational characteristic, a combination of behaviours, feelings, and attitudes typical to life in an organization and occurs apart of members' expectations and understandings (Ekvall, 1996: 105). Schneider (1975: 474) defined organizational climate as psychologically meaningful molar descriptions that people agree on practices and procedures of a system. Organizational climate is linked to the interpersonal process characteristics of the informal aid in an organizational setting (Burke & Weir, 1978: 102). It includes employees' perceptions about ethical behaviors (Bartels, et al., 1998: 800). Organizational climate and ethical climate are conceptually related, both

are presumed to reflect the common views of the members regarding their working climate (Vardi, 2001: 325). Wang & Hsieh (2012: 537) make a distinction between organizational ethical climate and psychological ethical climate. The former is related to the ethical climate defined by an agreement of employees and the latter applies an individual's ethical atmosphere.

The ethical climate is a multi-dimensional construct (Wimbush, et al., 1997a: 75) and five dimensions of ethical climate are identified in the literature (Victor & Cullen, 1988:112; Wimbush & Shepard, 1994: 638; Wimbush, et al., 1997: 1710; Wang & Hsieh, 2012: 540): caring, rules, law and code, independence and instrumental. Caring is about the genuine concern of employees in the well-being of everyone, including people inside and outside of the organization. The rules dimension is related to employees' behaviors complying with the organizational rules and policies. Law and code prescribe that employees follow the codes and regulations composed by the occupation or governments. Independence holds that employees behave agreeing to their individual ethical convictions based upon a set of well-considered standards. Finally, the instrumental component is related to the employees' egoism as first and foremost, ignoring other employees' interest who are influenced by their decisions (Wimbush, et al., 1997: 1710).

The instrumental ethical climate is defined by the employees' current perceptions that they need to take care of themselves and their interests, irrespective of relationships with other employees or obligations with their company and society. Employees seek to achieve personal goals such as benefits and pay using the organization as an instrument (Ambrose, et al., 2008: 330). In those organizations, where instrumental climate is present, employees defend their interests above all (Deshpande, 1996: 658). Employees use a self-centered standard which is fundamentally focused on the maximization of self-interest (Sims & Keon, 1997: 1096; Tsai & Huang, 2008: 567). An

egoistic climate shows that by using other people, the organization encourages and endorses self-interested behaviors (Cullen, et al., 2003: 138). The instrumental climate incorporates the theoretical climate forms of self-interest and organization profit rounds up the individual and local references on the criterion of selfishness (Neubaum, et al., 2004: 337). In an instrumental ethical climate, managers shape their decision making on this assumption that employees (and organizations) are motivated by the egoistic interest (Robbins & Judge, 2017: 569).

1.2 Job Burnout

Without any doubt, the most known studies on job burnout are carried by Maslach and her colleagues. She defines burnout as a continual reaction to persistent emotional and interpersonal stressors at work that is characterized by three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach, et al., 2001: 397; Maslach, 2003: 189; Maslach, 2006: 37). Burnout is a unique type of stress syndrome that involves a sense of emotional exhaustion, a decay of individuals in the workplace and perceptions of decreased personal performance (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993: 651). Burnout is a result of problems with the social environment in which people work (Maslach, 2006: 50). Different from the acute stress reaction, which occurs in responding to individual critical incidents, it is an increscent response to workplace stressors (Leiter & Maslach, 2004: 94). It is prescribed as a sequence of negative attitudes and chronic fatigue within the work which has negative consequences on employees' health and efficiency (Bakker & Costa, 2014: 117). The main characteristic of burnout and the most visible manifestation of this complex syndrome is exhaustion, which is related to the feelings of being afflicted and drained of one's physical and emotional resources. The cynicism or depersonality alludes to the interpersonal context of burnout and it is related to a negative,

apathetic, or unreasonably reaction to different facets of the job. The inefficiency aspect (or reduced accomplishment) is a dimension related to self-assessment and refers to inability feelings followed by a lack of accomplishment and work efficiency (Maslach & Leiter, 2008: 498). Maslach & Jackson (1981: 102) developed a scale to measure experienced burnout consisting of three up-mentioned dimensions and 25 items.

In the sense of individuals, burnout is linked to problems like diminished self-esteem, depression, exhaustion, anxiety, and a decline in physical health. In the sense of organization, burnout is related to job-related stress and lack of work engagement (Beheshtifar & Omidvar, 2013: 112). Burnout negatively influences the daily functioning in the organization by increasing daily fatigue, self-undermining, and loss cycle of daily demands (Bakker & Costa, 2014: 117). In their study, Griffin, et al., (2010: 249) proved that job stress, as a negative state for employees, leads to job burnout. Employees with high levels of job stress experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion and cynicism. Job stress is triggered by inequality between employees' job demands and their skill and resources to meet these requirements (Yin-Fah, et al., 2010: 57). Dunford, et al., (2012: 646) in their study that has lasted two years, reported that emotional fatigue and depersonalisation at first increased little but then decreased for both current employees and newcomers, thus suggesting that burnout may change with the time, but this change is slight and is experienced by only some employees.

1.3 Turnover Intention

By definition, turnover is the rate at which employees leave the firm (Dessler, 2017: 316). Turnover is a permanent movement of employees beyond the boundary of the firm (Rahman & Nas, 2013: 568). Turnover intention is intended to leave the organization willingly or intentionally (Tett & Meyer, 1993: 262). Intention to leave seems to be the prompt

antecedent to actually quitting (Schwepker, 2001: 42). An earlier meta-analysis study of Cotton & Tuttle (1986) showed that overall job satisfaction, pay, employment perceptions, tenure, age and many other variables are found to be associated with turnover. Turnover intention is negatively related to positive affectivity, job satisfaction, and affective commitment (Chiu & Francesco, 2003: 293).

1.4 Relationship Between Instrumental Climate, Job Burnout and Turnover Intention

The organizational climate influences many processes in organization, ranging from decision-making, controlling, coordination, problem-solving, communication and psychological forms of learning, making, inspiration and commitment (Ekvall, 1996: 106). The ethical climate is expected to have a detrimental effect on job burnout and turnover intention. The presence of ethical working environment can increase the employees willingness to work (DeConinck, 2011: 622). Elçi, et al., (2015: 593) reported that ethical climate negatively influences emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. However, in this study ethical climate was measured with one dimension. From ethical climate dimensions, the only instrumental climate is positively related to negative behaviors, such as accomplice (Wimbush, et al., 1997: 1171) and negatively related to positive behaviors such as overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with promotions, coworkers, and supervisors (Deshpande, 1996: 658). Joe, et al., (2018) found that instrumental climate is directly and indirectly related to turnover intention. Given the positive directional effect of four ethical climate dimensions and the negative effect of instrumental climate on positive behaviors, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *Perceived instrumental climate has a positive impact on turnover intention.*

The relationship between job burnout and turnover intention has been built in the literature. Job burnout is positively associated with turnover intention (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004: 307; Herda & Lavelle, 2012: 716; Cannon & Herda, 2016: 71; Han, et al., 2016: 102; Rahim & Cosby, 2016: 1261). Employees with high levels of emotional exhaustion are more dissatisfied with their jobs and are more likely to quit (Mulki, et al., 2008: 567). When employees manifest burnout, like having physical and mental fatigue as a result of the reduced sense of accomplishment and increased sense of helplessness coming up from monotonous assignments and rigid hierarchies, turnover expectation is likely to emerge (Jung, et al., 2012: 2158).

Turnover intentions will increase significantly when employees' emotions reach their pressure limits (Yang, et al., 2014: 82). Numerous studies were conducted in the healthcare industry where this positive relationship was revealed (Lee & Shin, 2005: 104; Kim & Stoner, 2008: 18; Zhang & Feng, 2011: 8; Scanlan & Still, 2013: 315; Xiaoming, et al., 2014: 234). Based on these empirical findings, we suggest:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Emotional exhaustion has a positive impact on turnover intention.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *Emotional exhaustion will strengthen the relationship between perceived instrumental climate and turnover intention.*

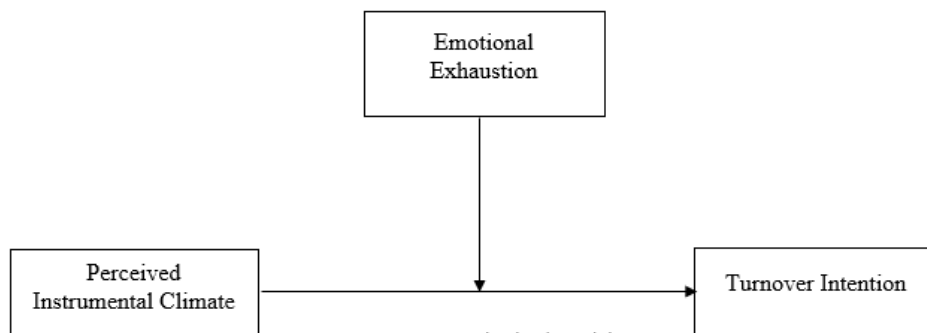


Figure 1: Hypothesized Model

2. METHODOLOGY

This study, by nature, is a field study and postulates the causal relationship modeled in Figure 1. It suggests that perceived instrumental climate is positively associated with turnover intention and this relationship is moderated by emotional exhaustion. The population of this study consists of employees from the private sector in Kosovo. Using convenient and snowball sampling, the sample of the study

consists of the people who could reach the link across Facebook groups of main cities in Kosovo and the people who reached the link through email.

To gather data, a survey adopted from previous studies was conducted. The perceived instrumental climate was assessed with six items developed by Wang & Hsieh (2012). Participants were asked to respond on a 5-point

Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Sample items cover “In this organization, people are mostly out for themselves”, “There is no room for one’s own personal morals or ethics in this organization. Emotional exhaustion was assessed using nine items proposed by Maslach & Jackson (1981). Participants were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Sample items include “I feel emotionally drained from my work”, “I feel burned out from my work”. The turnover intention was measured with three items proposed by Mobley, et al., (1978) and these items are extensively used by other studies. Responses were coded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items are: “I often think about quitting my present job”, “I will probably look for a new job in the next year”, “As soon as possible, I will leave the organization”. The questionnaire was translated into Albanian.

To test the hypothesized model SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 23.0 have been used. First, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) has been performed. Then, correlation analysis is used to test the linear relationship between variables. Finally, we have used path analysis to test the hypotheses.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive data about the sample. 56.6% of participants are male and 43.4% female. 54.9 of the participants belong to the age group of 20-29 years. 20.8% of participants work in the customer service department and 19% in the manufacturing department, followed by 15% in the sales department. 26.5% work in the sales position, followed by 18.1% in a managerial position. 46.9% have 1-5 years of work experience. 42.9% of participants have a bachelor’s degree. 40.3% of participants have an income of 301-600 euros

Table 1: Sample Data (n=226)

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	128	56.6
	Female	98	43.4
Age	20-29	124	54.9
	30-39	74	32.7
	40-49	23	10.2
	Over 50	5	2.2
Department	Customer Service	47	20.8
	Finance/Accounting	31	13.7
	MIS	19	8.4
	Sales	34	15.0
	Marketing Management	12	5.3
Position	Production	43	19.0
	Other	17	7.5
	Clerical	58	25.7
	Technician/Worker	41	18.1
	Managerial	47	20.8
	Accounting	15	6.6

Job tenure	Sales and related	60	26.5
	Other	5	2.2
	Less than 1 year	41	18.1
	1-5 years	106	46.9
	6-10 years	47	20.8
	11-15 years	16	7.1
	16-20 years	11	4.9
Education	Over 20 years	5	2.2
	Primary school or less	17	7.5
Income	High school and equivalent	44	19.5
	Undergraduate	97	42.9
	Graduate	57	25.2
	Doctorate	11	4.9
	0-300 euro	81	35.8
	301-600 euro	91	40.3
	601-900 euro	26	11.5
	901-1200 euro	17	7.5
Over 1200 euro	11	4.9	

Table 2 summarizes the CFA results. E8 item has been extracted from the model and errors of PIC1 and PIC4, and EE4 and EE5 were covariates, in order to get a better model fit. Thus, the threshold values; $\chi^2_{(114)}=199.93$, $p<.05$, CFI=.96, SRMR=.04, RMSEA=.05, PClose=.16 showed that the data fits well with the model. Factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients, convergent, and discriminant validity are obtained. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients and convergent validity show that the scales used are highly reliable and AVE values are over .50 for the three variables. Hence, our model is reliable and valid at the same time.

Table 2: Results of the CFA: Factor Loadings, average variance extracted and reliability

Parameter	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
PIC		.85	.85	.54
PIC1	.65			
PIC2	.52			
PIC3	.67			
PIC4	.67			
PIC5	.84			
PIC6	.85			
EE		.90	.90	.50
EE1	.86			
EE2	.77			
EE3	.75			
EE4	.47			
EE5	.77			
EE6	.79			
EE7	.54			
EE9	.84			
TI		.90	.90	.75
TI1	.89			
TI2	.81			
TI3	.90			

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

	Mean	St. Dev.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 PIC	3.39	.88	1									
2 EE	3.41	.87	.67**	1								
3 TI	3.54	1.13	.63**	.75**	1							
4 gender	1.43	.49	.00	.12	-.01	1						
5 age	1.59	.76	.03	.02	-.03	-.07	1					
6 department	4.10	2.39	-.08	-.07	-.14*	-.02	.12	1				
7 position	2.97	1.59	.11	.05	.01	.03	-.03	-.14*	1			
8 tenure	2.40	1.14	.08	.00	-.02	-.15*	.69**	.11	-.05	1		
9 education	3.00	.97	-.29**	-.28**	-.23**	-.02	.08	-.09	-.06	.03	1	
10 income	2.05	1.10	-.02	-.23**	-.16*	-.33**	.32**	.18**	-.20**	.43**	.13*	1

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).* **. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Before testing the hypotheses, we have performed the correlation analysis in SPSS. Table 3 reports the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis among PIC, EE, TI, and demographics. PIC is positively correlated with EE ($r=.67, p<.01$) and TI ($r=.63, p<.01$). EE is positively correlated with TI ($r=.75, p<.01$). Significant correlations among PIC and education ($r=-.29, p<.01$), EE and education ($r=-.28, p<.01$), EE and income ($r=-.23, p<.01$), TI and department ($r=-.14, p<.05$), TI and education ($r=-.23, p<.01$), TI and income ($r=-.16, p<.01$), and several correlations among demographics. It can be seen that the three variables, perceived instrumental climate, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intention are associated negatively with demographics.

moderation analysis was performed. Table 4 reports the results of the moderation analysis. The perceived instrumental climate has a positive effect on turnover intention ($\beta=.23, p<.00$). This shows support for our first hypothesis (H1). Emotional exhaustion has a strong effect on turnover intention ($\beta=.59, p<.01$). This result supports our second hypothesis (H2). Our last hypothesis held that emotional exhaustion would moderate the relationship between perceived instrumental climate and turnover intention. Nonetheless, the results of moderation analysis showed that this effect is almost zero and negative, and non-significant ($\beta=-.03, p>.48$). Although the effect of perceived instrumental climate on turnover intention is not as high as the effect of emotional exhaustion, the hypothesis (H3) was not supported. The results of the moderation analysis are presented in Figure 3. As can be seen, emotional exhaustion is not a significant moderator of the relationship between perceived instrumental climate and turnover intention. We even can state that emotional exhaustion has a damping effect on the positive relationship between perceived instrumental climate and turnover intention, but this effect is not significant and is almost zero.

Figure 2: Moderation Analysis

The conceptual model was tested through path-analysis in AMOS. Figure 2 shows that

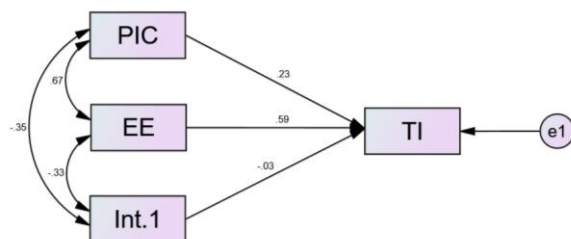


Table 4. Results of Moderation Analysis

Parameter	Estimate Regression Weight	Standardized Regression Weight	S.E.	t-value	p-value	Result
PIC→TI	.23	.23	.05	3.99	.00	S
EE→TI	.59	.59	.05	10.32	.01	S
Int.1→TI	-.02	-.03	.03	-.69	.48	NS

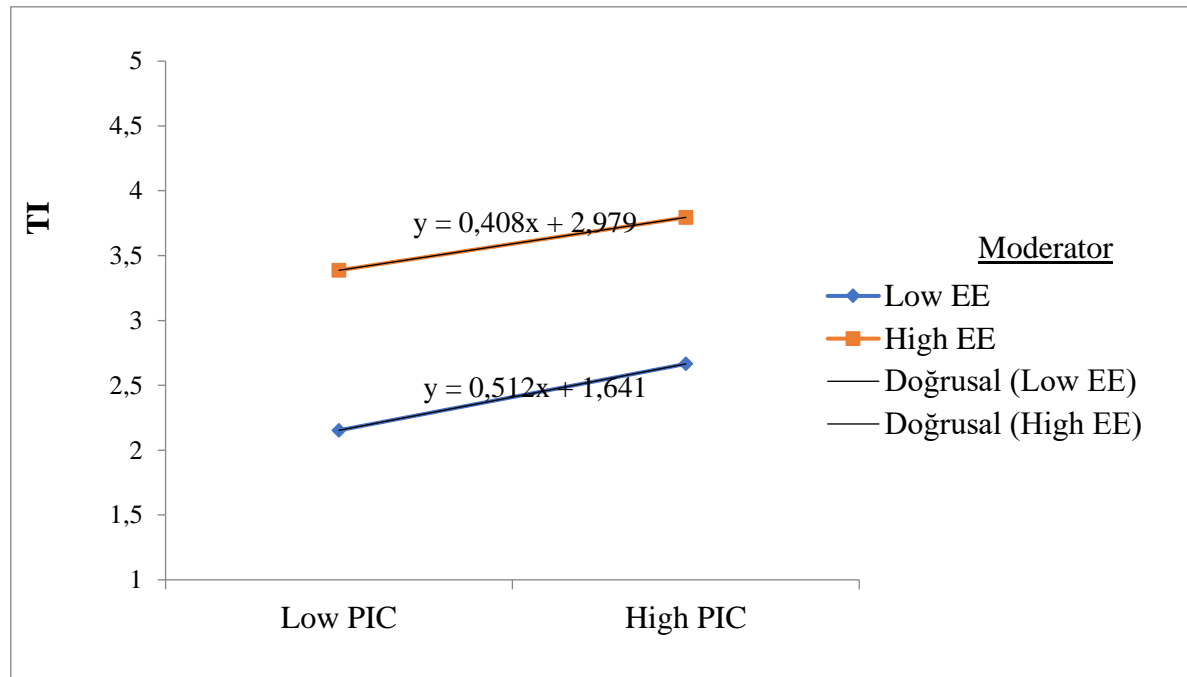


Figure 3: Results of moderation analysis

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to investigate the role of emotional exhaustion in the relationship between perceived instrumental climate and turnover intention. The results of the research showed that perceived instrumental climate has a positive effect on turnover intention. Consistent with previous studies, (Joe, et al., 2018) this study confirms the direct and positive effect of instrumental climate on turnover intention. In the adverse form, as it was revealed by Stewart, et al., (2011: 586) employees who

find an ethical climate on their organization, have negative turnover intention. The second hypothesis tested the effect of emotional exhaustion on turnover intention and it was found that emotional exhaustion has a stronger effect on turnover intention than instrumental climate. This finding is supported by various studies, mentioned before. However, the results of this study have failed to confirm the moderating role of emotional exhaustion on the relationship between perceived instrumental

climate and turnover intention. Thus, emotional exhaustion is not a moderator of this relationship.

Theoretical Implications; This study provides three theoretical implications. First, this study clearly indicates that instrumental climate is an important adverse variable of ethical climate which enhances turnover intention. As ethical climate is a diverse variable measured with different items, this study employs the definition of Wang & Hsieh (2012) and shows that perceived instrumental climate will be positively related to negative outcomes, such as job quitting.

Second, in accordance with earlier studies, this study proves the effect of emotional exhaustion on turnover intention. Finally, we expected that emotional exhaustion will strengthen the relationship between perceived instrumental climate and turnover intention because we held that perceived instrumental climate will have a lower effect on turnover intention and emotional exhaustion will have a strong effect on turnover intention, so emotional exhaustion would moderate this relationship. Nevertheless, when emotional exhaustion is added as a moderating variable, the relationship between instrumental climate and turnover intention becomes non-significant and is likely to dampen.

Managerial Implications; The findings of this study offer some practical insights for managers too. The instrumental climate in the organization may lead employees to leave the organization. When employees perceive that organization and other employees are focused on their personal interests rather on the employees' overall well-being, they probably will tend to quit the organization in a shorter time. At the same time, employees who experience emotional exhaustion will have an intention to leave the organization. Emotional exhaustion as a result of organizational and private life issues will certainly lead to turnover

intention. Managers of the companies needs to take care of their employees by isolating instrumental climate and enhancing positive ethical environment which motivates employees to stay within the organization. Managers of the companies needs also to help employees who are experiencing emotional exhaustion by lowering their daily tasks, giving them some time for personal problem or even in cases sending them in vacations. However, it seems that emotional exhaustion does not play a significant role in the relationship among instrumental climate in organization and turnover intention.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies; The results of this study are limited to the sample used for the analysis. Because of the current pandemic situation in the world, the survey was conducted online, therefore, the sample is limited only to the people who reached the link and filled the questionnaire. Although the survey is conducted with the employees of private sectors, most of the participants belong to young ages. At the same time, the current job positive may be related to pandemic situation where a lot of people lost their jobs and people who managed to keep their jobs, they seem to be happy or engaged.

Even though the moderating effect of emotional exhaustion was not confirmed, we recommend future studies to test the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion on this relationship. Instrumental climate has a positive effect on turnover intention, but it may have an indirect effect too through emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, future studies can test the effect of all job burnout dimensions and other ethical climate on turnover intention. This way, we can have a better comprehending of the detrimental effect variables on negative outcomes.

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