



Impact of Job Stressors Factors on Employees' Intention to Leave Mediated by Job Engagement and Dispositional Factors

Kavitha Ramamurthi^{1*}, Amin Vakilbashi², Siti Zaleha Abdul Rashid³, Mozhdeh Mokhber⁴, Rohaida Basiruddin⁵

¹International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur 54100, Malaysia, ²International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur 54100, Malaysia, ³International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur 54100, Malaysia, ⁴International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur 54100, Malaysia, ⁵International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur 54100, Malaysia. *Email: kavitha@hss.com.my

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between job stressors factors, job engagement factors (job stress, job commitment and job satisfaction), job dispositional factors (locus of control, self-esteem and social support from peers and supervisors) and the employees' intention to leave. Due to that this study is proposed a framework to study the impact of job stressors factors on employees' intention to leave moderated by job engagement factors and job dispositional factors. The findings can be used by the firm employers or management to take necessary approach to reduce high turnover rate in their companies.

Keywords: Job Stressors, Job Engagement, Dispositional Factors, Employees' Intention to Leave

JEL Classifications: M100, M140, M0

1. INTRODUCTION

Employees are the backbone of every industry specially the service based organization whereby employees are the main resources of the company to run the company's business operation. Due to the nature of business the employees faces various problems, job stress and level of job satisfaction and influence them to search better opportunities and leave the current company. Most of the time, the employees' intention the leave the business organization is not because of the salary or wages but rather job stress and dissatisfaction. The employees want their company to recognize and care for them. Perhaps the satisfied employees will understand their supervisor's and the organization expectation that they work under. The employees who are committed to their work and company will have lots of control of their future in the organization.

The turnover rate among employees has increased radically for the past few years. The turnover rate of the younger generation is higher compared to the older generation and the reasons are

basically due to the better opportunities and high wages from other company or business organization. Even though money is one of core reasons people leaving but there are several reasons that influence the employees intention to leave. Those employees who are apart of top management of the company highlights that the reason for them to leave is due to the better benefits and privileges offered by the other company compared to the current company. Meanwhile the professional employees and supporting staff tend to leave for their growth in term of knowledge and better career opportunities. The employee's turnover rate and intention to leave is a key issue to every organization. This issue leads to frustration to most of the company as the employee's high turnover rate causes the service disruption, customer dissatisfaction and unnecessary cost when the company needs to recruit, hire and train the new employees.

There are various factors that affect and influence the employees' intention to leave a company. The factors that influence the employee's intentions to leave are job stress, job dissatisfaction, low pay and lack of benefit packages, stressful work condition,

poor job matching, bad working conditions, lack of organizational commitment and other dispositional factors such as self-esteem, supervisor support and locus of control. In addition, there are other indirect factors that do affect the employee's job satisfaction which are such as lack of interaction between staff and management, lack of appropriate training to newcomers and non-conducive working environment, economy, the performance of the organizations itself, the culture adapted in organizations, characteristics of the job, unrealistic expectations from higher management, demographics and the person itself.

Based on the research conducted by Firth et al. (2004) job stressors impact the employee's intention to leave. The study indicated that there is a relationship between employees' intention to leave with dispositional factors and job engagement variables although not all dispositional factors contribute to the intention. Dispositional factor such as employees' locus of control does not influence employee intention to leave their job. However the above mentioned study were conducted in Australia in various industry, hence arise need to conduct study on the impact of job stressors that influence the employees intention to leave by using the job engagement and job dispositional factors in other contexts. Therefore this research aims to provide a framework to study the impact of job stressors on employees' intention to leave moderated by job engagement factors (job satisfaction, job commitment and feelings of stress) and job dispositional factors (locus of control, self-esteem and supervisory support).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Intention to Leave

Intention to leave can be defined as an employee's plan to leave or quit from their current job or company and move forward by looking another better offer (Purani and Sahadev, 2008). Based on a study on the dissatisfaction of nurses (Shields and Ward, 2001), the factors that lead to employees intention to leave are low salaries, low fringe benefits, inflexible working hours or schedule, career advancement prospect, poor management, job stress, family obligation, early retirement, length of service, low levels of motivation, emotional exhaustion and burnout and poor social image. All the factors highlighted are still fall under job commitment, job satisfaction, job stress, locus of control, self-esteem and social support categories. In addition, According to Firth et al. (2004) self-esteem and social support are positively related to employees' job commitment. Where by the employees with high self-esteem are very much committed to their job and task assigned to them. Perhaps the employees high self-esteem and good social support usually will stay longer in their current job as the employees are very happy, satisfied with their job and the environment (Rousseau and Aubé, 2010).

2.2. Job Stressors

Job stressors can be defined as scenario or contributing factors that lead an employee to leave a company. The situation happen when the employees are unable to face the job challenges as the challenges are beyond their capability, pace and insufficient resources. The stressors vary from one person to another person dependent on their personal capabilities. Firth et al. (2004)

concluded that there are no direct links between stressors and employees intention to leave. Thus there are other sub factors that indirectly impact employee's intention such as locus of control; self-esteem and social support do indirectly affect employee's intention to leave (Firth et al., 2004).

2.3. Job Stress

Job stress is considered to be the nonspecific response of the body to any demands made upon it which is an internal state or reaction to anything we consciously or unconsciously perceive as a threat, either real or imagined (Nilufar et al., 2009). These negative symptoms are frustration, worry, anxiety, depression and many work related issues. According to Pawar and Rathod (2007), job stress can be negatively related to job satisfaction. Additionally Mohani et al. (2005) have studied organizational sources of stress such as conflict, blocked career, alienation, work overload, and unfavorable work environment.

2.4. Job Commitment

Job commitment is also defined as psychological and emotional linkages between the employee and their job. According to Labatmediene et al. (2007) there is a negative correlation between the employees job commitment and employees intention to leave as the employees are more prone to stay at their current job if they have high commitment to their job or company. Employees will be committed to their job probably due to following reasons, which are he or she is effective and efficient in their job task, the cost living their current job are relatively high and he or she feels socially responsible towards his or her job. According to Firth et al. (2004) there are several factors may affect the employees' job commitment in an organization such as job stress and job satisfaction and the factors that indirectly influence job commitment are self-esteem, and social support. In addition Kuean et al. (2010) stated that organization commitment does affect the employee's turnover rate, behaviour and job performance.

2.5. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been closely related with many organizational phenomena such as motivation, performance, leadership, attitude, conflict, moral etc. Researchers have attempted to identify the various components of job satisfaction, measure the relative importance of each component of job satisfaction and examine what effects these components have on employees' productivity commitment (Rafael and Enrique, 2005). According to Nilufar et al. (2009) job satisfaction is the sum of job facet satisfaction across all facets of a job. Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction not only depends on the nature of the job, it also depends on the expectation from the job (Mohani et al., 2005). Job satisfaction is a complex phenomenon with multi facets (Nilufar et al., 2009); it is influenced by the factors like salary, working environment, autonomy, communication, and organizational commitment (Rafael and Enrique, 2005).

2.6. Locus of Control

In the psychological term, locus of control is defined as an individual's extent of believe that internal and external factors control the events in his or her life (Anuraghini, 2012). There were several studies conducted to explain the locus of control on both

internal and external perspectives (Karimi and Alipour, 2011). Internal locus of control can be defined as an events and outcomes that can be influenced by the individual's beliefs and actions. The external locus of control considers that all the outcomes or results happened in life are directly related to external factors such as chance, fate, managers (Karimi and Alipour, 2011). The internal and external locus of control may impact the job performance, job commitment and job satisfaction. The employees with high internal locus of control tend to be more manageable, good control of stress, more contented, less miserable (Anuraghini, 2012).

2.7. Self-esteem

Self Esteem are defined as personal judgement about someone whereby is can be either positive or negative impression and always relates to an individual characteristic (Kundu and Rani, 2007). Self Esteem is one of the factors that can be used to assess employee capability and predict their future performance in the organization. The employees with high self-esteem will produce good quality and more efficient job which will make the employee feel satisfied and happy with their job. In addition, self-esteem plays an important role in impelling the workers turnover intentions, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, fundamental motivation and behaviours (Abraham, 1998).

2.8. Social Support

Social support means sharing information, knowledge transfer and emotional, social or practical help to others to solve the job related (Shirey, 2009). The social support and guidance by the supervisors and subordinates is very crucial factor that will affect employees' job satisfaction and job commitment in the company. The people who obtain emotional support feel that he or she is valued and appreciated by team and company.

2.9. Impact of Job Stressors on Job Engagement Factors

According to Firth et al. (2004) the job stressor such as role conflict, role ambiguity, work overload and work and family conflict have positive impact on the employees job stress. Nevertheless job stressors have negative impact on job commitment and job satisfaction. In addition the job stressor such as workload and conflict between work and family contribute to higher level of stress to the employees (Savery and Luks, 2001). The employees with high job stress will have lower level of motivation to work and not satisfied with their job (Savery and Luks, 2001). The employees that are not happy with the working environment and conditions due to the role ambiguity and unclear job scope will be less productive and lack of job commitment (Aziri, 2011). In addition the employees with high level of stress will be unhappy and dissatisfied with their current job, work place and have less commitment or engagement with the company. Anyway stressors such as job condition or job environments are the fundamental factors that cause stress to employees.

2.10. Impact of Job Stressors on Job Dispositional Factors

The job stressors such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and work overload and work-family conflict have negative impact on the job dispositional factors such as locus of control, self-esteem and

social support (Firth et al., 2004). However according to Spector and O'Connell (1994) job stressors such as autonomy, role ambiguity, role conflict and workload have a positive impact on employee locus of control. Basically the social support from the superior, supervisor and peers will help the employees to overcome their stress. Perhaps it will help to reduce the impact of job stressors in the company. The social support has moderate effect on the relationship between stressors such as work overload and work-family conflict and psychological malfunctioning. Moreover, the job stressors have very minimal impact on employees' self-esteem (Jex and Elacqua, 1999).

2.11. Impact of Job Engagement, Job Dispositional and Job Stressors Factors on Intention to Leave

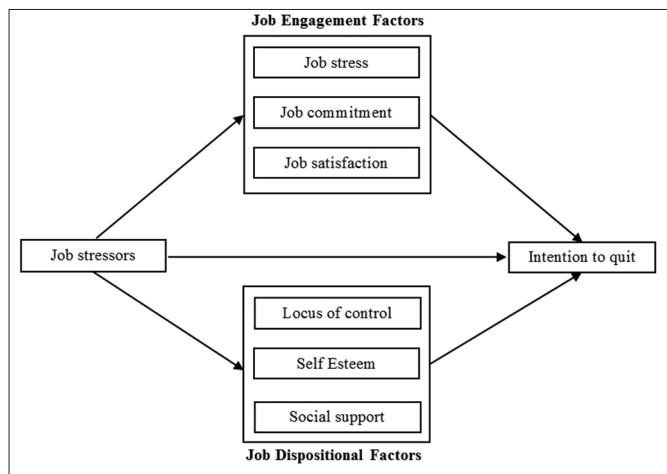
The job engagement factors such as job stress, job satisfaction and job commitment have positive impact on employees' intention to leave from the company or organization (Firth et al., 2004). The employees with high level of stress have lower job commitment and satisfaction (Fairbrother and Warn, 2003), and thus, increase their intensity to quit their jobs (Lam and Zhang, 2003). In addition Calisir et al. (2011) highlighted that the employees with high level of stress have higher possibility to leave their job. Job stress associates with employees' job satisfaction and job commitment (Firth et al., 2004). According to Calisir et al. (2011) the employees' intention to be also relatively depends on employees' job satisfaction. Job commitment plays an important role in influencing employees' intention to leave (Michael et al., 2009). The employees those have high intention to leave the company will have lower job commitment compared to those employees' with lower intention to leave (Calisir et al., 2011). Job commitment is also directly related to employees' job satisfaction. The organization commitment normally has more impact on the employee's intention to leave compared to job satisfaction (Lam and Zhang, 2003).

Job dispositional factors are such as self-esteem, social support and locus of control have positive impact on employees' intention to leave their current job and company (Lo and Ramayah, 2011). Low self-esteem, lack of social support from supervisors and subordinates and lack of locus of control will increase the employee's intention to leave. Therefor job dispositional factors can be considered as factors which directly impact the intention to leave. Job stressor such as role ambiguity, role conflict, work overload and work-family conflict have no direct link with the employees intention to leave (Firth et al., 2004). In addition, the employees intention to leave influence by job stressors through the social support and job engagement factors such as job satisfaction, job commitment and job stress. The employees' intention to leave is moderately related to the employees' job commitment and satisfaction towards the company they are currently working (Calisir et al., 2011).

2.12. Conceptual Framework

Previous studies mostly investigated the influence of job stressors on intention to leave while it is not clear how it may impact it. Based on the literature, job engagement and job dispositional factors are major factors in intention to leave. Therefore the purpose of this research is to address the critical gaps by reviewing

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



the existing research on employees' intention to leave the job while providing a framework to measure the influence of job stressors, job engagement and job dispositional factors receptivity toward employees' intention to leave (Figure 1). This research contributes to the body of knowledge via developing a conceptual framework to examine the mediating effect of job engagement factors and job dispositional factors on the relationship of job stressors factors and employee's intention to leave, in order to bring more insight into this relationship.

3. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the relationship of job stressors factors with employees' intention to leave work, and the mediating role played by job engagement and job dispositional factors. By providing empirical evidences on these perceptions, this research may support leaders and their firms to identify the source of organizational turnover. To recognize the external competitiveness and future survival, organizations need to deal with challenges of human resource. Undoubtedly, leadership styles have certain influences toward the employees, they enhance employees' ability to carry out tasks and motivate them to perform beyond expected. Job stressors play a vital role for intention to leave.

This research can be empirically implement for any further studies in the different industry to check whether the framework applicable to others contexts. However the different industry will have different factors, thus it is important to find the influencing factors before proceed with this study. The future researcher can even into focused into smaller group such as professional employees only the supporting staff only. Lastly in this study the moderators' effects are not considered thus the future researchers can test the moderators and mediators effects of all the proposed variables.

REFERENCES

Abraham, R. (1998), Emotional dissonance in organizations: Conceptualizing the roles of self-esteem and job-induced tension. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 20, 18-25.

Aziri, B. (2011), Job satisfaction: A literature review. *Management Research and Practice*, 3(4), 77-86.

Calisir, F., Gumussoy, C.A., Iskin, I. (2011), Factors affecting intention to quit among IT professionals in Turkey. *Personnel Review*, 40(4), 514-533.

Fairbrother, K., Warn, J. (2003), Workplace dimensions, stress and job satisfaction. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 8(1), 8-21.

Firth, L., Mellor, D., Moore, K.A., Loquet, C. (2004), How can managers reduce employee intention to quit. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 19(2), 170-187.

Jex, S.M., Bliese, P.D. (1999), Efficacy beliefs as a moderator of the impact of work-related stressors: A multilevel study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84(3), 349-361.

Kuean, W., Kaur, S., Wong, E. (2010), The relationship between organizational commitment and intention to quit: The Malaysian perspective. *Journal of Applied Sciences*, 10 (19), 2251-2260.

Kundu, S.C., Rani, S. (2007), Human resources' self-esteem across gender and categories: A study. *Industrial Management & Data*, 107(9), 1366-1390.

Labatmediene, L., Endriulaitiene, A., Gustainiene, L. (2007), Individual correlates of organizational commitment and intention to leave the organization. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 2(2), 196-212.

Lam, T., Zhang, H.Q. (2003), Job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the Hong Kong fast food industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 15(4), 214-220.

Lo, M.C., Ramayah, T. (2011), Mentoring and job satisfaction in Malaysian SMEs. *Journal of Management Development*, 30(4), 427-440.

Mohani, A., Hashanah, I., Noor, I.H.J. (2005), Job Satisfaction among Executives: Case of Japanese Electrical and Electronic Manufacturing Companies. Malaysia: Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Nilufar, A., Zaini, A., David, Y.G.F., Syed, S.A. (2009), A Study of Job Stress among University Staff in Malaysia: Empirical Study. Malaysia: Universiti Teknologi Mara and Multimedia University.

Pawar, A.A., Rathod, J. (2007), Occupational stress in naval personnel. *Medical Journal Armed Forces India*, 63(2), 154-156.

Purani, K., Sahadev, S. (2008), The moderating role of industrial experience in the job satisfaction, intention to leave relationship: An empirical study among salesmen in India. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 23(7), 475-485.

Rafael, M.B., Enrique, F.M. (2005), Job Satisfaction as an Indicator of the Quality of Work. Spain: Universidad de Salamanca.

Karimi, R., Alipour, F. (2011), Reduce Job stress in Organizations: Role of Locus of Control. Malaysia: University Putra Malaysia.

Rousseau, V., Aubé, C. (2010), Social support at work and affective commitment to the organization: The moderating effect of job resource adequacy and ambient conditions. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 150(4), 321-340.

Savery, L.K., Luks, J.A. (2001), The relationship between empowerment, job satisfaction and reported stress levels: Some Australian evidence. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 22(3), 97-104.

Shields, M.A., Ward, M. (2001), Improving nurse retention in the National Health Service in England: The impact of job satisfaction on intentions to quit. *Journal of Health Economics*, 20(5), 677-701.

Shirey, M.R. (2009), Authentic leadership, organizational culture, and healthy work environments. *Critical Care Nursing Quarterly*, 32(3), 189-198.

Spector, P.E., O'Connell, B.J. (1994), The contribution of personality traits, negative affectivity, locus of control and Type A to the subsequent reports of job stressors and job strains. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 67(1), 1-12.