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**INTERPLAY OF JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN PREDICTING  
TURNOVER INTENTIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment have an important bearing on Turnover Intentions. Literature reports turnover intentions to be the outcome of satisfaction and commitment. Many studies have determined that there is a substantive relationship among job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions. However, there exists a controversy on relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In past, some researchers found that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. While some studies have determined that commitment plays a mediating role. In this context, this paper attempts to explore the interplay among job satisfaction and organizational commitment in predicting turnover intentions.

**KEY WORDS: Turnover Intentions, Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction**

**INTRODUCTION**

Employee turnover remains to be one of the most important concerns that had been investigated all over the world. Researchers across the globe have come up with different models to investigate and gain a deeper insight of job attitudes that determine employee turnover intentions. The job attitudes that influence the employee turnover intentions that researcher attempts to explore through this paper includes job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The relationship among job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee turnover intentions has been widely studied (Yang 2009; Lane et al., 2010). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment have an impact on turnover intentions of an employee. Job satisfaction is one of the most sensitive and

researched area in the field of organization behaviour. It is evident that increased satisfaction is related to increased productivity (Gruneberg 1979, Herzberg et al., 1959; Judge et al., 2001; Schultz 1973; Spector 1997). Job satisfaction results in lower employee turnover and reduces cost of hiring. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment have a definite association indicated by the past researches. But there is a differentiated opinion about the casual relationship between them (Bateman & Strasser 1984; Bluedorn 1982; Dossett and Suszko 1990; farell and Rusbutt 1981; Lance 1991; Mowday et al., 1982; Vandenberg and Scarpello, 1990). Literature clearly indicates that turnover intention is an outcome of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Horn and Griffeth, 1995).

Contemporary trends in turnover research show that the decision to leave an organization is a complex process that emerges often from shocks to the system (Lee and Mitchell 1994). Further, Lee and Mitchell (1994) argued that routine habits and work create a level of inertia for an individual and it requires them to experience shocks that force them to think and rethink their employment and confirm their idea of either staying with the organization or leave the organization.

It is researched that commitment and job satisfaction predict employee turnover intentions and they further proclaimed that organizational work pressure, having work schedule that meets one's requirement, feeling physically safe at work, feedback and organizational quality environment also indirectly affect the employee turnover intentions through job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The findings reveal that the employees who are more satisfied with their jobs and committed to the organizations have a lesser tendency to leave their organizations.

Sarminah and Salma (2012) demonstrated that when employees perceive their organizations having more concern for personal development, improvement and welfare of employee by proving support, emotion and attachment of the employee with the organization will improve and in turn reduce the turnover intention. It is further demonstrated, the most powerful predictor of employee turnover intentions are job attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job involvement whereas work environment mediates the relationship between them.

Several other studies have consistently demonstrated the impact of job satisfaction and organizational commitment on employee turnover intentions. These job attitudes are viewed as important antecedents or predictors of turnover intentions. It is further illustrated that increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment are good strategies for reducing turnover intentions and absenteeism (Wong et al., 2001; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Toponytsky, 2002; Steel & Ovalle, 1984; Tett & Meyer, 1993; and Yin & Yang, 2002).

## ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational Commitment is identified as one of the most critical factor that helps in understanding and explaining work-behaviour of employees in organizations. Organizational commitment is described as the extent to which an employee identifies with and is involved with an organization (Curry et al., 1986). Guatam, Rolf, Ulrich, Narottam and Ann (2005) define organizational commitment as a psychological situation that determines the relationship of an employee with organization and as a commitment towards the whole organization. Organizational commitment is referred to as the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in an organization (Mowday et al., 1982). Mason (1995) pointed it as the degree to which an employee believes in and accept organizational goals and desires to remain with the organization.

Meyer and Allen (1997) viewed and analysed organizational commitment as an affective commitment first and then as continuance commitment and in their subsequent studies, they developed three dimensional structure of organizational commitment by adding normative commitment within the model (Wasti 2000; Meyer, David, Stanley and Laryssa 2002). This model has been tested quite often and happens to be the most comprehensive view of construct (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001).

Affective Commitment is defined as the commitment of an worker in an effective way; continuity commitment is referred as perceived cost of leaving the organization and Normative is perception of workers for their duty nd responsibilities towards administration and colleagues Meyer et al.,2002; Gautam et al., 2005).

The first two forms of commitment have gained more importance and attention. Affective is emotional attachment with the organization whereas continuance is perceived cost of leaving the organization and third dimension of normative commitment is loyal attitude towards organization derived from the sense of obligation.

Porter et al., (1974) identified three factors of organizational commitment- a strong belief in goals and values of organization; willingness to exert considerable effort and a strong desire to remain the member of organization. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) noted that organizational commitment is considered as a bond or linking of an individual with an organization.

A wide range of variables have been identified as predictors for commitment, including personal characteristics (e.g. age and level of education), job characteristics (e.g. autonomy, feedback, teamwork, work environment, and work pressure), and (c) organizational characteristics (e.g. size, leadership style, career prospects, human resource policies, possibilities for future education, and participation in decision making (Mowday, Steers, and Porter 1982)). In general, age, organizational

tenure (Igbaria and Greenhaus 1992), employee attitudes toward training (Bartlett 2001), training effectiveness (Kontoghiorghes and Bryant 2004) is found to be positively related to organizational commitment (Igbaria and Greenhaus 1992; Smeenk et al. 2006). Education levels either do not impact organizational commitment (Igbaria and Gernnhaus 1992) or are negatively related to commitment (Mathieu and Zajac 1990).

### **JOB SATISFACTION**

Traditionally Job satisfaction is expressed as satisfaction of workers from their jobs or perception towards different aspects of their jobs (Agho, Mueller and Price, 1993). Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as pleasurable or positive emotional state, resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. Job satisfaction is the negative or positive attitude and perception of employee towards their jobs or working environment (Pool 1997). According to Luthans (1998), Job Satisfaction is emotional response to a job situation which can be inferred, often is determined by how well the outcomes meet or exceed expectations Overall, job satisfaction is a reflection of 'an employee's attitudes of overall acceptance, contentment, and enjoyment in their work (Lee-Kelley, Blackman, and Hurst 2007, 206) and is typically measured in degrees of multiple Human Resource Development International 149 perceptions using multiple constructs or scales such as pay, promotion, supervision, co-workers, to name a few (Hsu 2009; Schmidt 2007). Several work related attitudes are considered as important characteristics defining job satisfaction such as salary, level of role ambiguity, role conflict, promotion and salary hike, personal rights of employees, empowering employees, working conditions, employee perception of work related issues (Kirkman and Rosen 1997; Chet, Ryan, Schmeider, Parra and Smith 1998). It also includes work itself, pay, promotion opportunities, supervision and co-workers (Luthans, 1998).

Lowry, Simon, and Kimberley (2002) found that employees who received training opportunities showed more job satisfaction than those who did not. However, in terms of the influence of demographic differences on job satisfaction, mixed findings have been presented. Some studies revealed a positive association between age (Lee and Wilbur 1985; Reiner and Zhao 1999), job tenure (Bedeian, Ferris, and Kacmar 1992), and gender (Hulin and Smith 1964) with job satisfaction; others found only age and organizational tenure were related to job satisfaction, and the relationships of education, job tenure, race, and gender to job satisfaction were not significantly different from zero (Brush, Moch, and Pooyan 1987).

Most people experience some degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their work which tends to vary from one job to another; also, some aspects of the job are more satisfying than the others. It is also believed that satisfaction with one's job may influence various aspects of work such as

efficiency, productivity, absenteeism, turnover rates, and intention to quit and also an employee's overall wellbeing (Baron, 1986). Organizations measure job satisfaction because it is indicative of work behaviour such as absenteeism, turnover, and productivity. Research indicates a number of dimensions that have a strong relation with employee's overall experience of job satisfaction. It is not only related to environment factors such as physical and psycho-social but also with individual, emotional, and economic factors and have been found to be related to job turnover, absenteeism, and tardiness (Brayfield and Crockett, 1955).

It has been argued that men and women have different view for job satisfaction. Women have different expectations than men with regard to their job or work. It is also identified that low job satisfaction has negative consequences on the employees and increases turnover rate and intention to leave (Tett and Meyer, 1993).

Empirical evidence show that when an employee's job Satisfaction decreases, his or her turnover intentions increase. However, because of their stronger attachment to their jobs and their aversion for the risk involved in changing jobs, one may suspect that even at low levels of job satisfaction, people may tend to continue their job in public sectors. Most of the researches have been carried out in private sectors in west and east part of the world but no significant research has been done to explore the construct in Defence Services.

### **TURNOVER INTENTION**

Employee turnover is one of the biggest concerns being faced by the HR managers. It is described as the rate at which the employer losses employees or how long the employee intents to stay with the organization. The intention or the actual intention to leave has been identified as the most immediate psychological determinant of actually quitting the job (Hom & Griffeth, 1995).

### **ANTECEDENTS OF TURNOVER INTENTIONS**

Some of the significant and established antecedents of turnover intentions that have received empirical support are:

**Individual Factors:** The demographics considered for examination that have impact on turnover intentions are age, gender, marital status and job tenure. Career stage and development theories (Levinson et al., 1978; Miller & Form, 1951) argue that older employees are more satisfied with their jobs and hence have lower desire to move. Zeffane and Gul (1995) have also found that higher turnover intentions are experienced by younger employees. This tendency of employees is linked with job tenure i.e. individuals with longer job tenure tend to build socio-professional ties that minimizes their intention to move. Finegold et al. (2002) also authenticated the relationship and stated that individuals may experience more constraints in leaving the organization, as family

responsibilities increase with age, thus, reducing ease of movement. Lucas et al. (1987) also found that there is an inverse relationship between tenure and turnover intentions. Sager, Futrell and Varadarajan (1989) identify the cause of this as changes that take place in a person's mental makeup "as they mature in a job". Another perspective is that by Mathieu and Zajac (1990) is that the longer a person's relation with an organization, the greater would be individual investment (e.g. pension plans etc.) and risks (e.g. promotions and raise). Thus the likelihood of the employees staying with the firm increases. Harrell and Eickhoff's (1988) found that actual turnover did not differ for male and female accounting professionals during their initial years of employment. However, most researchers (Rasch & Harrel, 1989; Baroudi & Igbaria, 1995; Igbaria & Chidambaram, 1997; Ahuja, 2002) have found that female professionals experience greater desire to move because of tendency to hit a glass ceiling because of greater structural barriers and fewer job opportunities (Guttek,1993). However, Ahuja (2002) also found that because of fewer opportunities and resources, females perceive less ease of movement as compared to men. Marital status was found to be negatively related to turnover intentions (Doran et al., 1991) may be because married employees have greater emotional and financial commitments which results in lower desire to move and less ease of movement. Several researchers have attempted to test the role of personality and attitude on turnover intentions. Chiu and Francesco (2003) have suggested that attitude and dispositional variables influence turnover intentions significantly. Chiu et al. (2005) found that the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intentions is not personality specific for highly educated and self-motivated employees.

**Organisational Factors:** Work related factors particularly conditions of employment (salary, career advancement) are important causes of turnover intention (Iverson & Roy, 1994; Rosse & Miller, 1984; Mitchell et al., 2001). Predominant among role factors are role conflict and role ambiguity (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Another factor that contributes to job related stress and intention of turnover is role overload (Kahn et al., 1964; Wunder et al., 1982). Lee and Ashworth (1996), Moore (2000) and Ahuja et al. (2007) have empirically established the role of subjective factors like role conflict, role ambiguity and perceived work overload in their positive contribution towards turnover intentions. Greenhaus (1988) and Netemeyer et al. (1996) have identified the balancing act between work and family life as another stressor and one that requires further for the investigation.

### THEORIES OF TURNOVER INTENTIONS

Recognizing the unfavourable nature of turnover and also turnover intentions, a number of theories and models have made use of such pragmatic studies to explain the nature of the phenomena. Some of these models and theories are explained here.

**Organisational Equilibrium Theory:** March and Simon (1958) proposed that turnover occurs when an individual perceives that there is an imbalance and that his contribution to the Organization is beyond the inducements he receives from the organization. This equilibrium between contribution and inducement is influenced by two variables - desire to move and ease of movement. Desire to move is a function of one's satisfaction with the work environment and ease of movement is predisposed by macro and individual level factors, which establish employment conditions.

**Met Expectations Theory:** Porter and Steers (1973) further built on the equilibrium theory and proposed that "the discrepancy between what a person encounters on the job in the way of positive and negative experiences and what he expected to encounter"- is one of the important determinants of turnover intentions. These set of expectations can take multitude forms, from rewards and career growth to on the job relations etc.

**Linkage Model:** Mobley (1977) and Mobley et al. (1978) proposed intermediate steps in the decision to quit a job start with evaluating the current job, resulting in job satisfaction/dissatisfaction, dissatisfaction is the converted to thoughts of quitting and leads to job search behavior. Once an attractive alternative is found and evaluated, the individual converts the turnover intention to actual withdrawal from the job.

**Unfolding Model of Turnover:** This model was proposed by Lee and Mitchell in 1994. It points that there are four different psychological paths that an individual take when quitting. They intended that the most important trigger in the process of turnover is a shock, which might be an event that forces employees in the direction of premeditated judgments about their jobs which might elicit a pre-existing plan of action, the person may quit without any contemplation or discussions. In case if there is no pre-existing approach, the individual carries out extensive cognitive pondering –like evaluating job satisfaction and job alternatives. What is momentous about the model is an "impulsive" route to quitting vs. a rational traditional school of thought.

**Contingency Model of Turnover Intentions:** Zeffane and Gul (1995) have proposed a P-O or contingency model of employee turnover that conceptualizes each organization as being composed of two spheres - the individual sphere that includes personal values and style; and the organisational sphere. The congruency between the two would result in consonance or dissonance which in turn impacts the employee's commitment. The individual tries to exercise some amount of control and persuade the organizational factors, which in turn have impact on turnover intentions. The model states - degree of satisfaction, perceived influence and perceived ease of alternative employment play substantive superseding effects in the influence of personal - organizational styles interface on turnover intentions.

**Attributional Model of Work Exhaustion:** Moore's (2000) proposed a model of work exhaustion consequences. He emphasized that instead of considering on individual factors, the situational factors of the work environment –like role overload, role conflict and ambiguity, lack of autonomy and rewards are perceived to lead to work exhaustion. More emphasized, that this exhaustion is a gradual erosion process which at some point in time the individual recognizes and may eventually decide to quit the job (turnover intentions).

**Job Embeddedness Theory:** Mitchell et al. (2001) tried to address the rationale why some individuals are more averse to quit than others. They argued that individuals stay with their Organisations because they are entangled in a muddle that prevents them to quit their jobs. Individuals are entrenched when they have strong association with people or activities, are snug with their job and community fit and need to make greater sacrifices if they leave their organizations. Job embeddedness theory, like Zeffane and Gul's (1995) model, includes non-work factors that affect individual's ease of leaving the organisation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW ON INTERPLAY OF JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS

### ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND TURNOVER INTENTION

One of the most ingrained and researched prophecy of turnover has been organization commitment (Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Hollenbeck & Williams, 1986; Tett & Meyer, 1993; Meyer et al., 2002). The relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intentions has been widely studied (Gamble and Huang 2008). Previous research in China finds strong evidence that turnover intentions are negatively related to both affective and continuance commitment (Chen and Francesco 2000; Cheng and Stockdale 2003). Further to this, a number of studies have found that turnover intention is one of the most important contributions to actual turnover (Lee & Mowday, 1987). Both Meyer et al. (2002) and Bentein et al. (2005) look on Organizational Commitment as an attitude and have evaluated it through the affective, cognitive and convictive components. Researchers found that affective commitment of an employee towards his parent organization work with his pay satisfaction and by reducing Turnover Intentions. The extrapolative upshot of Organizational Commitment on Turnover Intentions, thus, is substantial.

### JOB SATISFACTION AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS

Furthermore, prior literature reported that job satisfaction successfully predicted turnover intentions (Farrell and Rusbult, 1981; Price and Mueller, 1981; Steers and Mowday, 1981; Mobley, 1982; Baysinger and Mobley, 1983; and McEvoy and Cascio, 1985). Mobley et al (1979) highlighted the fact that job satisfaction was one of the important variables in explaining turnover intentions

among employees. In their meta-analytic review, Cotton and Tuttle (1986) reported a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Many studies conducted amongst the employees in the western countries consistently showed negative and significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention (Mowday, Porter and Steel, 1982; Duraisingam, Pidd and Roche, 2009;. Chen, Chu, Wang, and Lin,2008; Lee and Rwigema,2007;Hayes et.al.2006; McCulloch and Turban,2007) ( Griffeth, Hom, and.Gaertner,2000; Judge, Heller, and Mount,2002; Ostroff,1992). Similar, studies were conducted in the Eastern countries, for instance in China that also supported the generally agreed opinion of a negative association between job satisfaction and turnover intention among employees (Yang 2008) (Tzeng 2002, Yin and Yang 2002, Zhou, Long, and Wang,2009; Jiang, Baker, and Frazier,2009) (Lam, Baum, and Pine,2001). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that job satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intentions

### **ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION**

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are multidimensional phenomenon and Complex constructs which have attracted the attention of Human resource and organization development (OD) professionals in understanding the complexity of organizational satisfaction and commitment and agree that no theory can explain such complexity (Swanson and Holton 2008). Lot of research has been done in the West which is rich with literature on postulations and its relevance on work-related outcomes that endeavour to explicate satisfaction and commitment (Rummler and Brache 1995; Cummings and Worley 2009). While scholars agree that theories can only explain specific and limited ranges of satisfaction and commitment constructs, practitioners are always looking for a variety of instruments to measure these outcomes in organizations (Fields2002). Over the past 20 years, job satisfaction and organizational commitment have been studied extensively by organizational behavior researchers and are found to be positively associated with each other and with other organizational outcomes in many different types of organizations and situations, across different levels of analysis, and across cultures (Lam and Schaubroeck 2000; Xiao and Bjorkman 2006). Although the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment is well researched in the Western context, very little is known about these correlations internationally and nationally in Defence Services.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, JOB SATISFACTION AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS**

There is a conflict on relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. But the evidence from literature and practical, opine that job satisfaction is an important indicator of organizational commitment (Testa 2001).Organizational Commitment being an important variable associated with turnover intentions it plays a mediating role in perception of employees towards HR

practices and their intention to leave (Guchait and Cho 2010). It is strongly associated with an individual's decision to stay or leave an organization (Horn and Griffeth, 1995). It has been analysed and tested in different contexts and is considered as a powerful indicator of turnover (Cole and Bruch 2006; Gamble and Huang 2008; Su, Baird and Blair 2009; Kwon, Bae and Lawler 2010).

Most researchers (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Vroom, 1964; Locke, 1975; Mobley, 1977, Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Hom & Griffeth, 1991; Tett & Meyer, 1993) have found a significant, negative relation between job satisfaction and turnover. Organisational commitment also has an inverse and significant relationship with turnover. When employees feel committed to an organization they are more likely to stay with the organization (Mobley et al., 1978; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Igbaria & Greenhaus, 1992; Ahuja et al., 2007). Some researchers have also established the moderating effect of job satisfaction on the commitment-turnover relationship (Porter et al., 1974; Steers, 1977), i.e. an individual whose needs are satisfied in an organization is more likely to be committed and likely to stay with the organization. While the other body of research recommends that it is organizational commitment that mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and job commitment.

Despite of this, many studies have found job satisfaction as the corner stone in decision for intention to leave an organization. As many organizations are trying to engage or improve their HR practices which would enhance job satisfaction (Das 2007; Thite and Russell 2010). Low job satisfaction results in negative effect on employee and increase turnover and tendency to leave (Tett & Meyer 1993). While some studies conclude that there exist a strong relationship between job satisfaction and Organizational commitment (Fletcher and Williams 1996). It is also demonstrated that both job satisfaction and organizational commitment with organization are negatively related to turnover intentions and intention to quit (Currevan 1999; Griffeth et al., 2000; Horn and Griffeth 1995; Mathieu and Zajac 1990; Mowday et. Al, 1982).

It is also found that age, marital status have effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Various exploratory studies had been conducted which show substantive relationship between commitment and satisfaction (Tanner 2007). Ingersal et al., (2002) found a significant relationship between commitment and job satisfaction. Blegn (1993), Irvine and Evans (1995) also conclude that there is strong relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment which in turn affect turnover intentions.

It is also analysed that do both the factors contribute to turnover intentions, organizational commitment is a dominant factor (Griffeth et al., 2000) . There are substantial evidences that both factors are statistically related with turnover intentions. Logistic Regression analysis indicates a positive and substantive relationship between the two constructs. Further, Demir, Usta & Okan

(2008) conducted a survey and tried to analyse the effect of job satisfaction and organizational commitment on turnover intentions via linear regression analysis and concluded substantively positive degree of relationship. The nature of causal relationship between job satisfaction and organization commitment has not been resolved as to which is a dominant factor in predicting turnover intentions. The predominant view is that job satisfaction is an antecedent to organizational commitment (Lincoln and Kalleberg,1990;Mowday et.al,1982;Muellert et al.,1994; Williams and Hazer,1986).There is also some support for the reverse causal ordering , organizational commitment as an antecedent of job satisfaction (Vadenberg and Lance,1992). A recent meta-analysis on turnover research indicates that organizational commitment predicts turnover intention better than job satisfaction (Griffeth et al., 2000). On the basis of these findings from meta-analysis and dominant view on satisfaction-commitment research we can propose that Job satisfaction is an antecedent of organizational commitment which, in turn is an antecedent of turnover intentions.

#### **CONCLUSION**

From the available literature, it is concluded that there is diversity in finding and understanding the relationship between organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Majority of studies reveal that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment which have substantive effect on turnover intentions. While there are some studies which determine that organizational commitment plays a mediating role between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. This study tries to unveil the dichotomy of relationship between job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions. After systematic review, it may be poised that there are some other demographic variables that determine the relationship among constructs.

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