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Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention: The Mediating Effect of Affective Commitment

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Abstract

This study examined the mediating effects of affective commitment on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention in international school teachers. Previous research that assumed the total organizational commitment score to be the mediator between job satisfaction and turnover intention, found that organizational commitment only partially mediated the relationship. Therefore, the present study contributes to the literature by focusing only the mediating effect of affective commitment as this variable has been identified as having the greatest effect on organizational outcomes compared to normative and continuance commitments. A survey was conducted on 80 teachers in an international school in Jakarta, Indonesia, the data analyzes from which found that affective commitment fully mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Theoretical and practical implications are also given.

Keywords

Affective commitment, international school teachers, job satisfaction, turnover intention.

s a result of globalization and the easier movement of people around the world, there has been a significant rise in the number of international schools in non-Western countries. Originally, international schools, which follow a western education curriculum, were established to cater for the children of foreign workers and diplomats. However, these days, many local wealthy families are sending their children to international schools to give them a more global future. As the quality of a school's teachers determines the quality of education, competencies required of international school teachers are significantly different from teachers at the local schools; wide educational curricula

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knowledge, language abilities, and intercultural competencies; therefore, it is important to be able to retain the teachers as long as possible because of the high replacement costs associated with hiring new employees, the productivity losses, and the loss of valuable knowledge (Mobley, 2010).

Generally, before handing in their resignation, employees have the intention to leave (Milovanovic, 2017), which involves thoughts of leaving, beginning to look for position, and finally resigning (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). It has been found in several studies that turnover intention is a strong predictor of actual turnover (Jeswani & Dave, 2012).

Turnover has been related to two main factorial groups: internal and external. Internal factors can include demographic characteristics (age, education, gender, marital status, income, working period), and personalities (Alshammari, Qaied, Mawali, & Matalqa, 2016),

while external factors are related to the work life quality, job attitude, person/organizational fit, perceived organizational support, conflict and role ambiguity, job insecurity, and self-development opportunities (Alshammari et al., 2016; Azeez, Jayeoba, & Adeoye, 2016; Mehmood, Ahmad, Irum, & Ashfaq, 2016; Reio & Segredo, 2013). This study focused on job attitudes and in particular job satisfaction and affective commitment as the predictor variables because these two sub-factors are closely associated with employee intention and behavior at work such as turnover intention.

The theory of organizational identification (Ashforth & Mael, 2004) is relied on to explain the mediating effects of affective commitment. Organizational identification has been defined as the degree to which a company and its employees share the same values, goals, desires, and aims. When employees share organizational values, they tend to operate as a large team, have pride in their job and the organization they work for, and have a positive attachment to the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 2004). Therefore, it is argued that employees who are satisfied with all aspects of their job; the work itself, pay, supervision, promotion, and coworkers; voluntarily identify themselves as part of the organization by adjusting to the values, vision, mission, and goals of the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 2004; Haslam, 2004; Kovjanic et. al, 2012), all of which means that they have a strong intention to stay and a low turnover intention (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Kovjavanic et al., 2012). Based on the above argument, it is hypothesized that: "Affective commitment mediates relationship between job satisfaction turnover intention."

Methods

A cross-sectional survey method was used to collect data from 80 Indonesian teachers at an international school in East Jakarta. Demographic details; age, gender, education level, tenure, and department; were first gathered to provide background information on the respondents. The Human Department at the school distributed the questionnaires to all school departments, which were completed and returned in two days. All participants completed the questionnaires on a

voluntary basis and were assured of confidentiality; the survey was anonymous and the results were only used for research purposes.

Measures. Job satisfaction. The 2008 revised 10item Job Descriptive Index scale that was initially developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969) and was adapted by Tonia (2012) to fit with the tenets of Indonesian culture was used to measure five job aspects; the work, pay, supervision, promotion, and coworkers. The items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example item was; 'The supervision has a very favorable influence on my attitude toward my job." The coefficient alpha was 0.750, the internal consistency coefficients ranged from 0.364-0.666, and mean scores ranged from 2.212 -3.798, with a higher score indicating higher job satisfaction.

Affective commitment. The 6-item Affective Organization Commitment Questionnaire (ACQ) developed by Meyer and Allen (2004) and adapted by Kosmaya (2012) to fit Indonesian culture was used to measure affective commitment. The items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example item from the ACQ was; 'I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.' The coefficient alpha for the affective commitment scale was 0.753, the internal consistency coefficients ranged from 0.476-0.647, and the mean scores ranged from 2.434-2.919, with higher scores indicating higher affective commitment.

The data were analyzed using the correlation and regression analyzes in SPSS v21, and Hayes' PROCESS macro in SPSS v.21 was used to test the mediation effect of affective commitment. The mediation effect model was tested using a 5000 bootstrap sampling method with estimated bias-corrected confidences (Hayes, 2012).

Gender has been found to be correlated with turnover intention (Grissom, Nicholson & Keiser, 2012), with female employees having a higher turnover intention than male employees. Older employees who have been working longer have also been found to be more likely to stay in an organization than younger employees with less experience (Teclaw, et al., 2014), and

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Table 1. Demographic characteristics for the study participants

Aspect	Varian	N	%
Gender	Male	29	36.00%
Gender	Female	51	64.00%
	24-30	27	34.00%
Age	31-44	40	50.00%
	45-65	13	16.00%
	0–2	12	15.00%
Tenure	2-10	46	58.00%
	≥10	22	28.00%
Educational	S1	64	80.00%
Level	S2	16	20.00%

employees with higher levels of education have also been found to have higher turnover intentions (Stanley et al., 2013). Therefore, gender, age, educational level, and tenure were controlled for in the first step of the regression analyses.

Results

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the study participants (age, gender, educational level, and tenure), from which it can be seen that a majority of respondents were 31-44 years old (establishment stage) (Morrow & McElroy, 2010), female (64%), bachelor's degree holders (80%), and had been working from 2-10 years (58%).

The results of the correlations for the relationships between affective commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations between demographic variables (age, gender, educational level, and tenure), predictor variable, mediator variable, and outcome variable. Educational level was found to be negatively correlated with job satisfaction and affective commitment (r = -.328, p < 0.001; r = -.331, p < 0.001, respectively) positively correlated with turnover intention (r = .224, p < 0.001). Tenure was found to be positively correlated with job satisfaction and affective commitment (r = -0.285, p < 0.001; r= .203, p=.003, respectively) and negatively correlated with turnover intention (r = -.370, p < 0.001).

The results for the mediation effect of affective commitment on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention are presented in Table 3.

Our hypothesis stated that affective commitment mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. The results in Table 2 showed that the indirect effect of job satisfaction on turnover intention via affective commitment was significant (indirect effect = = -.152, SE = .070, 95% CI [-.299, -.025); therefore, the hypothesis was proven. It was also

Table 2. Correlations between study variables

	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Age	35, 96	8, 31	-						
2	Gender	NA	NA	044	-					
3	Educational Level	NA	NA	.230*	.041	-				
4	Tenure	6, 18	4, 87	.309**	.119	.035	-			
5	Predictor Variable Job Satisfaction	2,67	0, 90	086	.168	328**	.285**	_		
6	Mediator Varia- ble	2,07	0, 50	.000	.100	320	.203	-		
0	Affective Commitment	3,07	0, 66	145	.158	331**	.203*	.638**	-	
	Outcome Varia-									
7	ble Turnover inten- tion	3,08	0,92	121	049	.224**	370**	429**	495**	-

N=80. **p<0.01, *p<0.05; Note: NA = not applicable. Age and tenure were measured in years. Gender was dummy-coded (1 = male, 2 = female). Educational level was dummy-coded (1 = bachelor, 2 = post graduate).

Table 3. Mediation effect of affective commitment

		Outcome								
		M (Affective Commitment)				Y (Tu	ntion)			
Antecedent		Coeff	SE	p		Coeff	SE	p		
Control variables										
Educational Level		083	.044	.064		.055	.064	.394		
Tenure		.0241	.0106	.025		0408	.0154	.009		
Job Satisfaction	a	.404	.061	.000	С	305	.088	.001		
Affective Commitment		-	-	-	c′	154	.104	.143		
Constant i	i I	21.385	.262	.000	b	376	.145	.001		
					i 2	40.919	.381	.000		
		$R^2 = 0.4527$ F (3, 95) = 26,1914, $p < 0.0000$				$R^2 = 0.3209$				
						F(4, 94) = 11,1047, p < 0.000				

Note. $c = total \ effect$. $c' = direct \ effect$; $i_1 = constant \ coefficient$; $i_1 = constant \ coefficient$; $a = effect \ of \ X \ to \ M, \ b = effect \ of \ M \ to \ Y. \ Indirect \ effect = -.152, \ Boot \ SE = .070, 95\% \ CI \ [-0.299, -.025]$

found that affective commitment fully mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention as the direct effect between job satisfaction and turnover intention became nonsignificant (direct effect = -.154, SE = .104, 95% CI [-.359, .053]).

Our study contributes to the literature by revealing the contribution affective commitment has as an underlying mechanism in the job satisfaction-turnover relationship. Both job satisfaction and affective commitment have been previously found to be consistent predictors of turnover variables (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Perryer, Leighton, Firns & Travaglione, 2010); however, to our knowledge, this was the first Indonesian study to investigate the relative contribution of affective commitment over job satisfaction on turnover intention. Previous studies have employed social exchange theory to explain the relationship between job attitudes and turnover intention, which surmises that employees who are satisfied with one or more aspects of their job reciprocate these positive feelings by staying in the organization. However, our findings indicated that job organizational satisfaction might lead to identification, which in turn motivates the intention to stay, and that this intention is difficult to break even if employees are dissatisfied with one or more aspects of their job.

Limitations and future research direction

There were some limitations to this study. First, this study used specific samples from only one school and a small overall sample; therefore, as the sample only represented the teacher population in one school, the findings cannot be generalized to other populations. Future research is therefore necessary to replicate this study on other populations to confirm the predictive validity of the study variables. Second, a cross-sectional design was employed that limited the ability to confirm the causal relationships between the variables. Therefore, longitudinal or experimental studies are needed to firmly establish the causal relationships between the study variables. Third, self-reported measures were used to measure all study variables; therefore, there could have been common method and social desirability biases (Podsakof, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). However, several precautions were taken to minimize common method bias by ensuring that responses were voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. To minimize the social desirability bias, we ensured respondents that there were no correct or incorrect answers for any given items in the survey. However, future research could employ other rating methods or objective data to minimize the biases.

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Practical implications

The results suggested that if organizations wants to retain employees, they need to pay greater attention to the aspects of the job most associated with turnover intention; the work itself, pay, work group behaviors, supervision, and promotion, as employee satisfaction with these aspects tend to increase organizational identification, which decreases turnover intention. Human resource initiatives to increase job satisfaction include increasing supervisor support both on and off-the job, increasing employee competence by sending them to conferences, workshops and other learning and training programs, and providing clear career paths, as many respondents indicated that there were discouraged by the lack of progression/ promotion opportunities ((Lee & Eliette, 2011; Rhodes & Togood, 2016). Other human resource initiatives related to rewards performance and employee recognition for the best teacher of the month can also reduce turnover intentions.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The author(s) declared that there are no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship or the publication of this article.

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