“A study of quality of work life, organizational commitment and turnover intention”

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A study of quality of work life, organizational commitment and turnover intention

Abstract

This study examined the relationships among eight different dimensions of quality of work life (QWL), organizational commitment, and turnover intention. Cross-sectional survey data were collected from 254 employees who were working in the manufacturing firms in Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone, Penang, Malaysia. Both convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques were applied to select the respondents. Using multiple regression analysis technique, this study revealed that adequate and fair compensation, opportunity for continued growth, security, social relevance of work life, social integration and work and total life space in the work organization are negatively related to turnover intention. Opportunity for continued growth, security and social relevance of work life and social integration in the work organization are found to be positively related affective commitment. Moreover, opportunity for continued growth, security and social relevance of work life arepositively related to continuance commitment. Adequate and fair compensation, opportunity for continued growth, security and social relevance of work life and social integration in the work organization are positively related to normative commitment. Besides, all commitment dimensions are found negatively related to turnover intention. Affective commitment and normative commitment partially mediate the relationship between quality of work life and turnover intention. The overall findings suggest the relative importance of different dimensions of QWL to get better employees' outcomes in terms of commitment and retention. The present study expects more research on the relationship between QWL and employees' outcomes.

Keywords: quality of work life, organizational commitment, turnover intention, Malaysia.
JEL Classification: M14.

Introduction

The broad range of turnover studies indicate the significance and complexity of the issue since it has extensive impact on employees' psychology as well as on organizational performance (Long & Perumal, 2014). Thus, it is imperative for organizations to understand the reasons inherent to counter employees' turnover. Researchers have recognized that so far, many studies have been conducted to understand turnover intention of the employees as a reason behind the turnover (Demirtas & Akdogan, 2014). Turnover intention has been found as the strongest turnover predictor (Allen, Bryant & Vardaman, 2010; Bhatnagar, 2014). Managers must understand turnover intention, and know how to curb it, because this leads to monetary loss and indirect stress on existing employees of the company as well as disruption in production (Robbins & Judge, 2012).

This study examined the factors that may minimize the turnover intention of the employees. We propose that turnover intention may be minimized not only by ensuring quality of work life (QWL), but also through enhancing organizational commitment of the employees. The relationship between QWL and turnover intention with the mediating influence of organizational commitment is the essential focus of this study. The issue is how the stated relationship, which has not yet been investigated, might contribute to our understanding of organizational strategy to retain valuable workforce through reducing turnover intentions.

1. Research model and hypotheses development

There were six hypotheses developed from the proposed variables in the current study.

2. Quality of work life (QWL)

The present study follows Walton's QWL dimensions which have prior research evidence (Farjad & Varnous, 2013). Walton (1975) proposed eight major conceptual categories related to QWL, including adequate and fair compensation; safe and healthy working conditions; immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities; opportunity for continued growth and security; social integration in the work organization; constitutionalism in the work organization; work and total life space; and social relevance of work life.

3. Organizational commitment

As an attitude, organizational commitment is generally defined as a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization, a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization; and a definite belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organization (Luthans, 2011). Allen and Meyer (1990) identified three distinct dimensions of organizational commitment,

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namely: affective commitment, that is employees' emotional attachment to the organization; continuance commitment, that is employees' attachment to the organization as they perceive leaving is costly; and normative commitment, that is the feeling of employees' obligation to stay with the organization. The present study conceptualizes organizational commitment considering its three dimensions.

4. Turnover intention

Turnover intention refers to the subjective estimation of an individual regarding the probability that he or she will be leaving the organization in the near future (Mobley, 1982). It represents an attitudinal orientation or a cognitive manifestation of the behavioral decision to quit (Elangovan, 2001). Researchers have identified different predictors of turnover intention such as job satisfaction (Aydogdu & Asikgil, 2011); emotional dissonance (Celika & Oz, 2011) and; employees' engagement (Hussain, Yunus, Ishak & Daud, 2013). The current attempt is taken to explore QWL and organizational commitment as predictors of turnover intention.

Many researchers conclude that QWL has significant negative correlation with turnover intention (Almalki, Fitzgerald & Clark, 2012; Celika & Oz, 2011; Demir, 2011). QWL helps to enhance the loyalty of employees toward their organization and thus lower their intention to leave. Believing the stated concept, the following hypotheses are advanced:

H1a: Adequate and fair compensation is negatively related to turnover intention.

H1b: Safe and healthy working condition is negatively related to turnover intention.

H1c: Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities is negatively related to turnover intention.

H1d: Opportunity for continued growth and security is negatively related to turnover intention.

H1e: Social integration in the work organization is negatively related to turnover intention.

H1f: Constitutionalism in the work organization is negatively related to turnover intention.

H1g: Work and total life space is negatively related to turnover intention.

H1h: Social relevance of work life is negatively related to turnover intention.

Equally, prior studies found that QWL has a signifcant relationship with organizational commitment (Normala, 2010; Farjad & Varnous, 2013). Employees with higher levels of QWL will have a higher level of commitment toward their organization. Based on this concept, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H2a: Adequate and fair compensation is positively related to affective commitment.

H2b: Safe and healthy working condition is positively related to affective commitment.

H2c: Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities is positively related to affective commitment.

H2d: Opportunity for continued growth and security is positively related to affective commitment.

H2e: Social integration in the work organization is positively related to affective commitment.

H2f: Constitutionalism in the work organization is positively related to affective commitment.

H2g: Work and total life space is positively related to affective commitment.

H2h: Social relevance of work life is positively related to affective commitment.

H3a: Adequate and fair compensation is positively related to continuance commitment.

H3b: Safe and healthy working condition is positively related to continuance commitment.

H3c: Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities is positively related to continuance commitment.

H3d: Opportunity for continued growth and security is positively related to continuance commitment.

H3e: Social integration in the work organization is positively related to continuance commitment.

H3f: Constitutionalism in the work organization is positively related to continuance commitment.

H3g: Work and total life space is positively related to continuance commitment.

H3h: Social relevance of work life is positively related to continuance commitment.

H4a: Adequate and fair compensation is positively related to normative commitment.

H4b: Safe and healthy working condition is positively related to normative commitment.

H4c: Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities is positively related to normative commitment.

H4d: Opportunity for continued growth and security is positively related to normative commitment.

H4e: Social integration in the work organization is positively related to normative commitment.

H4f: Constitutionalism in the work organization is positively related to normative commitment.

H4g: Work and total life space is positively related to normative commitment.

H4h: Social relevance of work life is positively related to normative commitment.

Various researchers examined the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention and found a negative relationship (Aydogdu & Asikgil, 2011; Norazlan, 2008; Omar, Anuar, Majid & Johari, 2012; Lee, Hung & Chen, 2012). Employees with higher organizational commitment tend to show lower turnover intention. Based on the above statements, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5a: Affective commitment is negatively related to turnover intention.

H5b: Continuance commitment is negatively related to turnover intention.

H5c: Normative commitment is negatively related to turnover intention.

Farjad and Varnous (2013) reported that there is a correlation between QWL and organizational commitment, while other studies showed a link between organizational commitment and turnover intention (Emadzadeh, Khorasani & Nematizadeh, 2012; Omar et al., 2012). Kamel (2013) reported that there is a full mediation of the affective commitment in the relationship between QWL and intention to leave. From these findings, it can be concluded that organizational commitment is a variable that could mediate the relationship between QWL and turnover intention. Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H6a: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between QWL and turnover intention.

H6b: Continuance commitment mediates the relationship between QWL and turnover intention.

H6c: Normative commitment mediates the relationship between QWL and turnover intention.

5. Methodology

In this section we discuss sample data collection procedures, mesurements of the variables used in this study as well as the statistical tests employed to assess the hypotheses.

5.1. Sampling and data collection. Data were collected from the local employees who were working in manufacturing firms in Penang Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone, Malaysia. Out of the 363 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 254 useable questionnaires were received, yielding a response rate of 69.9 percent, which is considered acceptable.

5.2. Measurement. The level of QWL of employees was measured by 35 items adapted from Timossi, Pedroso, Francisco and Pilatti (2008). Extent of QWL was measured by using 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied). The three dimensions of organizational commitment developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) were administered in this study. Extent of organizational commitment was measured by 18 items using 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5(Strongly Agree). Turnover intention of employees was measured by 3 items adapted from Yucel (2012) using 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

6. Data analysis and results

We analyzed data by using Statistical Software Package. SPSS 20.0 and descriptive analysis, factor analysis, reliability analysis and single regression analysis were performed.

7. Characteristics of samples

There were 50.8% male and 49.2% female respondents. 64% respondents were in the age group of below 30 years and 36% were 35 years or more. Moreover, 68.1% respondents were single and the rest 31.9% were married. With regards to the education level, 11.4% of the respondents were master or doctor of philosophy holders, 64.2% of the respondents were degree holders. Diploma and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) holders were 14.6% and 9.8%, respectively. In terms of position, 15% of the respondents were in management level, the rest of the respondents (85%) were supporting staffs in their organizations. Majority of the respondents were full time employees (92.5%), only 1.6% of respondents were temporary workers. 8.3% of the respondents were working less than a year in their organization, 52.5% of total respondents had experience of working 1 to 5 years in their organization, 20.1% were working 5 to 10 years in their organization, and 14.2% of them were working for more than 10 years. In respect to the monthly income, 1.2% earned less than RM1000, 4.3% earned between RM1000 to RM1500, 22.4% earned between RM1500 to RM2000, 26.4% earned between RM2500 to RM3000, the rest 45.7% earned more than RM3000.

8. Factor structure of quality of work life

A factor analysis with principal component extraction and varimax rotation was performed on all 35 items in the eight dimensional model of Walton's QWL. Eight items out of total 35 items were discarded due

to low communalities, cross loading and absence of factor loading. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.904 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (Chi-Square = 3861.583, $p < 0.01$ at 0.000). The resultant model explained 71.11% of the variance of responses to the QWL construct. Total seven factors were extracted after the factor analysis, including immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities, constitutionalism in the work organization, opportunity for continued growth, security and social relevance of work life, work and total life space, adequate and fair compensation, social integration in the work organization, and safe and healthy working conditions.

9. Factor structure of organizational commitment

All negatively worded statements, namely items AC3, AC4 and NC1, were reverse scored using transform function. Eight items out of total 18 items were discarded due to low communalities and cross loading. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.768 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (Chi-Square = 883.103, $p < 0.01$ at 0.000). The resultant model explained 68.21% of the variance of responses to the organizational commitment construct. Total three factors were extracted, namely normative commitment, continuance commitment and affective commitment.

10. Factor structure of turnover intention

Factor analysis was performed on three items of turnover intention. None of the items of turnover intention was discarded. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .742 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (Chi-Square = 508.894, $p < 0.01$ at 0.000). The resultant model explained 84.21% of the variance of responses to the turnover intention construct.

11. Reliability analysis

Reliabilities with 0.70 are considered acceptable (Sekaran, 2003). Table 1 shows the Cronbach's alpha of each dimension of variables.

Table 1. Reliability analysis

Variable	Dimensions of variable		Number of items	Cronbach's alpha, α	Percentage of the variation explained
Quality of work life	CW	Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities	5(0)	.861	71.11%
	CR	Constitutionalism in the work organization	4(0)	.882	
	OPSR	Opportunity for continued growth, security and social relevance of work life	9(3)	.823	
	SL	Work and total life space	3(0)	.907	
	AS	Adequate and fair compensation	4(1)	.869	
	SI	Social integration in the work organization	4(1)	.762	
	WC	Safe and healthy working conditions	6(3)	.776	
Organizational commitment	NC	Normative commitment	6(2)	.801	68.21%
	CC	Continuance commitment	6(3)	.837	
	AC	Affective commitment	6(3)	.733	
Turnover intention	TI		3(0)	.904	84.21%

Note: numbers shown in brackets indicate the number of deleted items.

12. Relationship between QWL and turnover intention

Multiple linear regression (MLR) was used to determine the relationship between the whole set of QWL and turnover intention. The results in Table 2 illustrate that all the dimensions of quality of work life explained 37.6% of the variance in turnover intention ($F = 21.16$, $p = 0.000$). All the dimensions of QWL except immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities and constitutionalism in the work organization have negative relationship with turnover intention.

Table 2. Summary of regression analysis with QWL variables predicting turnover intention (N = 254)

Quality of work life (independent variable)		Turnover intention (dependent variable)		
		B	Std. error	Beta
CW	Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities	.083	.091	.060
CR	Constitutionalism in the work organization	.002	.083	.002
OPSR	Opportunity for continued growth, security and social relevance of work life	-.340	.103	-.233**
SL	Work and total life space	-.153	.066	-.140*
AS	Adequate and fair compensation	-.323	.076	-.270**

Table 2 (cont.). Summary of regression analysis with QWL variables predicting turnover intention (N = 254)

Quality of work life (independent variable)		Turnover intention (dependent variable)		
		B	Std. error	Beta
SI	Social integration in the work organization	-.239	.092	-.159**
WC	Safe and healthy working conditions	-.108	.091	-.079
R^2		.376		
R^2 Adjusted		.358		
F		21.156		
Significance		.000		
Durbin-Watson		1.906		

Note: *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$.

13. Relationship between QWL and organizational commitment

Table 3 shows that all the dimensions of QWL explained 12.5% of the variance in affective commitment (F = 5.00, p = 0.000); 10.7% of the variance in continuance commitment (F = 4.22, p = 0.000) and 46.0% of the variance in normative commitment (F = 29.94, p = 0.000).

Table 3. Summary of regression analysis with QWL variables predicting organizational commitment (N = 254)

Quality of work life (independent variable)		Organizational commitment (dependent variable)								
		Affective commitment			Continuance commitment			Normative commitment		
		B	Std. error	Beta	B	Std. error	Beta	B	Std. error	Beta
CW	Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities	-.111	.083	-.104	.035	.083	.033	.088	.064	.084
CR	Constitutionalism in the work organization	.075	.076	.073	.002	.076	.002	-.035	.059	-.035
OPSR	Opportunity for continued growth, security and social relevance of work life	.228	.095	.202*	.189	.094	.170*	.511	.073	.460**
SL	Work and total life space	.075	.060	.089	.095	.060	.114	-.068	.047	-.081
AS	Adequate and fair compensation	.048	.070	.051	.134	.070	.146	.239	.054	.262**
SI	Social integration in the work organization	.260	.084	.224**	-.023	.084	-.020	.144	.065	.126*
WC	Safe and healthy working conditions	-.203	.083	-.192*	-.049	.083	-.047	-.024	.064	-.023
R^2		. 125			.107			.460		
R^2 Adjusted		.100			.082			.445		
F		4.998			4.221			29.940		
Significance		.000			.000			.000		
Durbin-Watson		1.769			2.303			2.180		

Note: *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$.

14. Relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention

Table 4 indicates that all the dimensions of organizational commitment explained 35.0% of the variance in turnover intention (F = 44.83, p = 0.000). It was also found that normative commitment was the strongest predictor for turnover intention (β = -0.413, $p < 0.01$) followed by affective commitment (β = -0.282, $p < 0.01$) and continuance commitment (β = -0.130, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, it gives a clear support to hypotheses H5a, H5b and H5c.

Table 4. Summary of regression analysis with organizational commitment variables predicting turnover intention (N = 254)

Organizational commitment (independent variable)		Turnover intention (dependent variable)		
		B	Std. error	Beta
NC	Normative commitment	-.541	.074	-.413**
AC	Affective commitment	-.365	.069	-.282**
CC	Continuance commitment	-.170	.072	-.130*
R^2		.350		
R^2 Adjusted		.342		

Table 4 (cont.). Summary of regression analysis with organizational commitment variables predicting turnover intention (N = 254)

F	44.833
Significance	.000
Durbin-Watson	1.892

Note: **p* < 0.05, ***p* < 0.01.

15. Mediation effect of organizational commitment between QWL and turnover intention

Table 5 represents the results of the mediation effect of organizational commitment on the relationship between QWL and turnover intention.

Table 5. Summary of hierarchical regression results using organizational commitment as mediator in the relationship between the QWL variables and turnover intention (N = 254).

Variables entered		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
		Standardized β	Sig.	Standardized β	Sig.	Standardized β	Sig.	Standardized β	Sig.
CW	Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities	.060	.362	.036	.573	.062	.345	.083	.196
CR	Constitutionalism in the work organization	.002	.977	.019	.757	.002	.976	-.008	.901
OPSR	Opportunity for continued growth, security and social relevance of work life	-.233**	.001	-.186**	.008	-.222**	.002	-.108	.152
SL	Work and total life space	-.140*	.021	-.119*	.041	-.133*	.029	-.162**	.006
AS	Adequate and fair compensation	-.270**	.000	-.258**	.000	-.260**	.000	-.199**	.002
SI	Social integration in the work organization	-.159**	.010	-.107	.076	-.160**	.009	-.125*	.037
WC	Safe and healthy working conditions	-.079	.235	-.124	.056	-.082	.218	-.085	.186
AC	Affective commitment			-.234**	.000				
CC	Continuance commitment					-.064	.228		
NC	Normative commitment							-.272**	.000
R^2		.376		.424		.379		.416	
R^2 Adjusted		.358		.405		.359		.397	
F		21.156**		22.506**		18.729**		21.784**	
Durbin-Watson		1.958		1.958		1.911		1.839	

Note: **p* < 0.05, ***p* < 0.01.

16. Discussion

This study contributes in examining the relationship among QWL, organizational commitment and turnover intention of employees.

16.1. QWL and turnover intention. Hypotheses H1a, H1d, H1e and H1g were supported in this study, whereas no clear evidence was found to support hypotheses H1b, H1c and H1f. In other word, adequate and fair compensation, opportunity for continued growth, security and social relevance of work life, work and total life space and social integration in the work organization were found negatively related to turnover intention. On the other hand, safe and healthy working conditions, immediate opportunity use to and develop human capacity and constitutionalism in the work organization were found not supportive to influence turnover intention. Nonetheless, it is suggested that quality of work life should be approached properly so that employees do not become actual leaving employees.

16.2. QWL and organizational commitment. In this study, hypothesis testing for QWL variables predicting affective commitment gives a clear support to hypotheses H2d and H2e, whereas no clear evidence was found to support hypotheses H2a, H2b, H2c, H2f and H2g. In relation to QWL and continuance commitment, only H3d was supported in this study, while hypotheses H3a, H3b, H3c, H3e, H3f and H3g were found unsupported. In this study hypothesis testing for QWL variables predicting normative commitment gives an obvious support to hypotheses H4a, H4d and H4e. The findings show no clear evidence to support hypotheses H4b, H4c, H4f and H4g. However, organizations should not ignore the importance of these unsupported dimensions of QWL to improve overall organizational commitment, rather they must put emphasis on all dimensions of QWL to get highly committed workforce.

16.3. Organizational commitment and turnover intention. Hypotheses H5a, H5b and H5c were supported in this study. This finding was confirmed by Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011). Therefore, it is further confirmed that organizational commitment has the potential to lower turnover intention of employees. The results indicate that highly committed employees are more loyal in staying with the organization.

16.4. Organizational commitment as a mediator. Hypothesis testing for organizational commitment as a mediator in the relationship between the QWL variables and turnover intention in this study supports hypotheses H6a, H6c. No support was found related to hypothesis H6b. Affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between opportunity for continued growth, security and social relevance of work life, work and total life space, adequate and fair compensation and turnover intention. It was also found that affective commitment fully mediates the relationship between social integration in the work organization and turnover intention. In this study, normative commitment was found to fully mediate the relationship between opportunity for continued growth, security and social relevance of work life and turnover intention. Additionally, normative commitment partially mediates the relationship between work and total life space, adequate and fair compensation, social integration in the work organization and turnover intention. In this study, continuance commitment was found not to be statistically significant as a mediator for the relationship between the QWL variables and turnover intention. This result represents that QWL ensures greater affective and normative commitment to reduce employees' turnover intention. QWL along with these two commitment dimensions significantly reduce employees' intention to leave the organization. Hence, such relationship warrants practitioners and managers to design and implement employees' retention strategy in the organization.

Conclusion

This study was aimed to investigate the relationship among eight dimensional QWL, three dimensional organizational commitments and turnover intention among workers of Penang Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone, Malaysia. The findings suggest the importance of overall QWLof employees in enhancing their commitment and retention. The present study concludes that employees' perceptions on the relationship among QWL, organizational commitment and turnover intention will improve, if organization approaches its employees' management activities from the perspective of cultivating QWL that should be reflected in the formal organizational policy and procedures. Moreover, it is expected from the future researchers to examine the relationship between QWL and employees' outcomes in the organizations. Organizations may find that ensuring QWL could be an effective strategy to proper employees' management.

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