

SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND TURNOVER INTENTION: TESTING THE MEDIATION EFFECT OF PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT

NOOR AZLINA YUSOFF AND YUSLIZA MOHD YUSOFF*

Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Development, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, 21030 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia.

*Corresponding author: yusliza@umt.edu.my

<http://doi.org/10.46754/umtjur.v4i4.282>

Abstract: The study's overarching goal was to experimentally investigate how Person-Organization Fit (POF) mediates the connection between a Supportive Work Environment (SWE) and an employee Turnover Intention (TI). Academic staff from Malaysian Research Universities (RUs) were selected using a technique of convenience sampling. Multiple items from previous studies were incorporated into questionnaires to collect responses utilizing quantitative methods. Partial Least Squares (PLS) Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) were performed using the Smart PLS 3.2.8 software sampling technique for statistical analysis and testing the proposed hypothesis. The results of this study are meant to demonstrate why SWE is linked favourably and significantly to TI. Furthermore, POF worked as a mediator between an SWE and TI relationship. This study finds that university management should continue developing ways to deliver SWE to establish a healthy environment for employees, which would lessen their willingness to resign. The literature connecting SWE and TI will benefit significantly from this research while stressing the essential retention aspects that must be considered. Additionally, the study explains the constraints and scope of future research.

Keywords: Supportive Work Environment (SWE), Person-Organization Fit (POF), Turnover Intention (TI).

Introduction

In general, researchers found attrition and its surrogate, attrition intent, as the method of worker withdrawal. In the beginning, turnover behaviour was described as the movement of personnel to another employer. Meanwhile, turnover intention describes a worker's propensity to seek new employment soon (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Price, 2001). Organizations increasingly fret over employee turnover, which remains a formidable obstacle for today's HR professionals and academics (Abdulkareem *et al.*, 2015). Companies incur additional costs and see a decline in productivity and performance as a result of high rates of voluntary employee turnover (Han *et al.*, 2016; De Winne *et al.*, 2019; Khan, Khan & Bodla, 2021). Despite its harmful effects, the literature reveals a high propensity to change jobs among highly qualified employees worldwide. In May 2017, 3.2 million Americans voluntarily left

their jobs, up from 2.9 million in July 2016 (BLS, 2017). Voluntary turnover is rising across all industries and Asian corporations are no exception. Of those who answered the survey, 34% were actively seeking work and 24% of those people said they planned to change occupations within the next six months (Hays, 2017). Voluntary turnover impedes accomplishing strategic goals, according to these figures. Neri and Wilkins (2019) state that it has always been a priority for colleges and universities to hire and keep qualified academic staff.

Bangwal and Tiwari (2018) state that employees desire a better work environment to enhance their safety. To retain professional staff, it is essential to develop a favourable work environment that considers organizational support (Ghosh & Sahney, 2011). Supportive Work Environment (SWE) increase the anticipated retainment of valued employees

(Naz *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, prior studies state that a company's culture and atmosphere will help cultivate talented employees and reduce turnover (Lin & Huang, 2020). SWE is required for businesses to continue healthy growth and performance (Luthans *et al.*, 2008). Conteh and Yuan (2021) state that individual performance depends on the support system from the organization that can make employees support the organization's goals. Employees will believe in the organization's principles and give their all to ensure the company's success when they feel valued and supported by it (Le & Lei, 2019).

According to a significant body of literature, Person-Organization Fit (POF) is essential in determining positive results for individuals and organizations (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005; Resick *et al.*, 2013). POF is the degree to which an individual or group fits in with another (Kristof-Brown, 1996). According to prior research, an organization's POF affects everything, from job happiness to citizenship behaviour to commitment and performance (e.g., Cable & DeRue, 2002; Verquer *et al.*, 2003; Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005; Youngs *et al.*, 2015). Conversely, Naz *et al.* (2020) and Ketkaew *et al.* (2020) argue that an absence of POF significantly affects the likelihood of a worker leaving their current position. Employees are less likely to quit their employment if they experience a greater sense of belonging at work (Jin *et al.*, 2016; Ng *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, POF plays an essential role in minimizing turnover intentions. Those with a high POF are more pleased in their jobs and less likely to quit and damage the relationships they see as authentic (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005; Jo *et al.*, 2020; Huang, 2021). Despite its significance, little is known about how POF mediates the relationship between SWE and TI.

This study examines the connection between SWE and the intention to leave an organization. First, it analyzes how POF is a mediator between SWE and TI. Thus, our research will add to the existing literature by providing a contextualized view of the SWE as perceived supervisory relationship, peer group interaction, and perceived organizational

support. To our knowledge, no research has ever identified such SWE components. We conceived the SWE factors for predicting employee turnover to give a holistic view of these processes. However, the connection between SWE and turnover intent and the function of POF as a mediator has yet to be investigated. Second, the present study has important methodological implications. Developing more precise techniques has revealed some holes in the initial generation of quantitative methods. The use of second-generation methods, structural equation modelling is encouraged because of its importance in a social scientific investigation (Hooper *et al.*, 2008; Hair *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is recommended for models with complex and mediated structures (Nitzl *et al.*, 2016; Richter *et al.*, 2016; Avkiran, 2017). Thus, even though the model is based on previously established relationships, incorporating these relationships represents a significant extension of existing research.

Considering the preceding, this research provides a conceptual model to investigate the causes and consequences of turnover intention (Figure 1). Considering the existing research, the following objectives have been established for this conceptual paper:

- (1) To examining the connection between SWE and intent to turnover.
- (2) To determine the effect of POF in the SWE and TI relationship.

The Literature Review and Proposition Development

Supportive Work Environment

The SWE was measured in four dimensions: Perceived organizational support, supervisory relationship, perceived climate, and peer group interaction (Kundu & Lata, 2017). SWE is considered a climate factor that includes support from a supervisor or a peer and the chance and ability to practice learned behaviours in the workplace (Baldwin & Ford's, 1988). Using such measures, an organization can foster an

environment that encourages talented individuals with a high level of expertise to remain employed because they are secure in their jobs and pleased with the conditions in which they work (Prieto & Pérez-Santana, 2014).

The results of past research e.g., (Kundu & Lata, 2017; Yusliza *et al.*, 2020) found that the perceived climate, supervisory relationship, peer group interaction and perceived organization support are positively related to POF. Consequently, we first conceptually identified POF in terms of SWE and then experimentally explored the function of SWE that affects turnover intention.

In order to structure the SWE, we relied on the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Perceived climate, supervisory relationship, peer group interaction, and perceived organizational support are new additions to the SWE literature. Therefore, the studies might be phrased as follows:

Proposition 1: Perceived climate will be positively related to POF.

Proposition 2: Supervisory relationship will be positively related to POF.

Proposition 3: Peer group interaction will be positively related to POF.

Proposition 4: Perceived organizational support will be positively related to POF.

Person-Organization Fit

Previous research has demonstrated that the POF is negatively correlated with turnover intention. For example, a study by Hue *et al.* (2022) found that the POF was linked with turnover intention among staff in public universities in Vietnam. In addition, Hoffman and Woehr (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of 121 studies between 1967 and 2003 and found a link between turnover and the POF. Researchers found a similar outcome in a study of luxury hotels in Korea (Jung & Yoon, 2013). According to their studies, employees with a POF tend to stay in a business longer. Other example studies e.g., (Rani & Samuel, 2016; Memon *et al.*, 2018) proved strong ties between POF and turnover intention. Most notably, they found that employees' intentions to leave their current company were significantly

impacted by the POF between their current firm and their ideal workplace. A person's positive attitude and behaviour at the workplace can be attributed to a congruence between their beliefs, goals, and personality qualities with those of the organization and their coworkers. Researchers found that POF workers were more invested in their jobs than their non-POF counterparts. Therefore, the proposition hypothesizes:

Proposition 5: POF will be negatively related to turnover intention.

The Mediating Role of Person-Organization Fit

Several studies on POF have begun examining the mediating mechanism that led to employee outcomes. One other mechanism proposed by Collings and Mellahi (200) is Person-Organization Fit. Preferred Occupational Fit describes how well an employee's personality and values align with their employer's (Kristof, 1996). In addition, it has been said that a critical component of Preferred Occupational Fit is when an organization's norms and beliefs align with those of its employees (O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991). From an organizational standpoint, values are particularly effective for retention management since they are perceived as "basic and generally permanent" (Chatman, 1991).

Furthermore, values are meaningful at individual and organizational levels, allowing for direct comparison (Cable & Judge, 1997). This concept emphasizes the individual's fit within the organization rather than a position, occupation, or group. It looks at two types of interactions between an individual and an organization: Either the individual and the organization work together to meet the needs of the other, or the individual and the organization have similar traits. The more natural the fit, whether supplementary or not, the more pleased the workers will be (Kristof, 1996; Bright, 2007). Thus, the researchers in this study hope that the POF may mediate the connection between SWE and academic staff turnover intention at Malaysian research universities. We, therefore, propose:

Proposition 6: POF will mediate the relationship between SWE and TI.

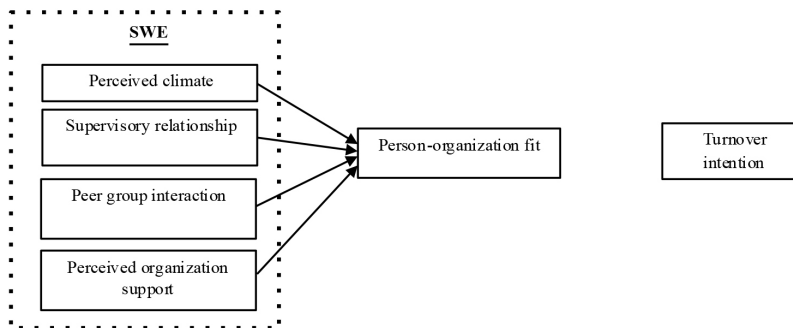


Figure 1: A proposed conceptual model

Conclusion

The anticipated results of this study suggested that SWE and POF are incredibly critical elements influencing an academic staff turnover intention. The second primary expected hypothesis tested in this research was that POF would serve as a mediator between SWE and turnover intention. Therefore, SWE and POF should be considered essential factors in reducing turnover intention among academic staff. The findings would theoretically contribute to university management by providing empirical evidence of SWE as the fundamental mechanism or process through which HR policies (such as POF) influence comparable performance outcomes, specifically employee turnover intentions. This analysis has several restrictions. The five hypotheses suggested have yet to be scientifically examined. A study of the existing literature solely substantiated the claims because this was a conceptual work. As a result, we support future research that applies our model and tests our conclusions and analysis using focused hypotheses and careful research design. Practical construct measurements must be developed and tested to validate the linkages indicated by our model. For instance, regression analysis could assist in evaluating how much a supportive work environment affects turnover intentions. Finally, in this light, SWE and POF are valuable tools for organizations trying to lower their turnover rate since they affect how committed workers are to staying with the organization and how much they go

above and beyond in their regular duties. As a result, if an employee's needs are met both at work and by the organization, he or she may develop a more optimistic outlook that can mitigate stress, promote increased performance, decrease turnover, and increase productivity and efficiency.

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