Eccentric Turnover Behavior among the Working Students of Pakistan

Zirgham ullah Bukhari

Abstract: The study is focused on measuring the effects of Conflicting Work Life Policies (CWLP) on Turnover Intentions (TI) with a mediating role by Job Satisfaction (JS). The sample population will be the employees who are maintaining their jobs along with their education. According to the previously conducted studies on different populations, the chosen constructs are interlinked but JS was not found to mediate the relationship between CWLP and TI; the primary purpose of this study is to look at the psyche of the working students in a manner that may help in the reduction of job turnover in Pakistan. The findings of this study suggest that JS mediates the correlation between CWLP and TI; as firstly CWLP was not identified as a strong determinant of TI and secondly CWLP only resulted in TI among working students through the mediation of JS.

Keywords: Turnover intentions (TI), conflicting work life policies (CWLP), job satisfaction (JS), working students, Pakistan

I INTRODUCTION

Job turnover is a dismal crisis for the managements of today’s businesses because of the ‘costs connected with it’ (Lucas, Parasuraman, Davis & Enis 1987 and Soon, Quazi, Tay & Kelly 2005). This research was mainly concerned about finding the relationship among conflicting work life policies (CWLP), job satisfaction (JS), and turnover intentions (TI). The respondents for this study were the working students who were completing their professional education while simultaneously working in some organization, as they are the ones more likely to turnover because of the difficulty to maintain a balance between their education and jobs at the same time i.e. they faced greater work life spillover as compared to the employees who have their whole attention concentrated and dedicated to their jobs only.

The study conducted by Oi-ling and Phillips (2006) and Kenexa Research Institute (2007) suggested that those ‘employees who favoured their organization’s effort to support work-life balance also indicated a much lower TI, greater pride in their organization, a willingness to recommend it as a place to work and higher overall JS’.

Furthermore, this research was anticipated to provide a helping hand in controlling the turnover trends, as mentioned earlier it is costing today’s businesses a lot and can be much a blessing for the organizations if reduced. As Yasbek (2004) cite that ‘turnover reduction leads to lower costs’, as recruiting new staff is a costly process. Therefore in the light of the findings of this research, it can be inferred that the TI among working students caused by CWLP can be controlled by addressing factors that enhance the JS level.

The results of this research conformed to the previously conducted studies as far as the presence of a relationship between the chosen constructs is concerned. But unlike the previously conducted studies by Karatepe and Kilic (2007) and West (2007) who found the ‘CWLP directly affecting TI’, this study identified CWLP as a weak determinant of TI. Moreover, contrary to the findings of Camp (1993), it was found that JS besides being a comparatively stronger determinant of TI; mediated the relationship between CWLP and TI among the working students of Pakistan.

II LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Turnover Intentions

Morrell, Loan-Clarke and Wilkinson (2001) defines turnover as a “discontinuous variable characterized by abrupt change, and a ‘delay rule’ which reflects the idea that employees try to stay in employment for as long as possible. Once employees feel they can no longer stay, they abruptly change from retention to termination (voluntary turnover)”. Karatepe and Kilic (2007) find that “work–family conflict or family–work conflict had a detrimental effect on job performance, job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and turnover intentions directly or indirectly”. Richer, Blanchard and Vallerand (2002) posit that “work satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, originating from work motivation leads to turnover intentions”. Batt and Valcour (2003) adds to the determinants of turnover previously identified, as their study finds that “flexible scheduling practices, supportive supervisors, job security and high relative pay were all associated with lower turnover intentions”. West (2007) elucidates that “conflict with a supervisor or management leads to higher turnover levels and by managing the conflict properly, organizations may in fact be able to reduce the turnover level”. Thaden (2007) also advocates the need to curtail turnover practices as per his view, “organizational culture change is an expensive endeavor; however high turnover and poor performance is likely to cost organizations more over time, especially as performance measures become harder to meet.” Tenure’s contribution to the equation emphasizes...
that ‘time variables need to be examined in turnover research’ (Mitchel 1981). ‘Age however, was not found to have a significant restraining effect on turnover intentions’ (Lachman & Diamant 1987). But dissimilar to the aforementioned view Birdseye and Hill (1995) argues that ‘not surprisingly perhaps, age was negatively correlated with turnover’.

B. Work Life Policies

Thompson, Andreassi and Pratts (2003) define work life policies as “artifacts or surface level indicators of an organization, prioritizing work over family or family over work”. “Work-life conflict refers to the difficulties in reconciling work and other domains of life” (McGinnity & Calvert 2008). Study by Konrad and Mangel (2000) implies that ‘work and family life conflicts may lead to employee turnover and withdrawal’. Research carried out by Karatepe and Kilic (2007) and West (2007) suggests that ‘greater work–family conflict results in higher turnover intentions’. Konrad and Mangel (2000) also suggest that “work-life programs can reduce employee withdrawal behaviors by reducing the impact of work-family conflict and by increasing motivation to exert discretionary effort”.

Likewise, the research by Marks and Scholarios (2001) elucidates that “lower negative work-to-nonwork spillover, directly affected employees’ intentions to remain with the company - excessive spillover reduced likelihood to remain; (i.e.) increased the possibility to turnover”. In addition Hom and Kinicki (2001) cite that “other types of interference besides work-family tension initiate the separation process”; (i.e.) the work life conflicts are not the sole stressor behind employee turnover. Richer, et al. (2002) differ by maintaining, “Bad working conditions do not always lead to actual turnover.” Results of Oi-ling and Phillips (2006) show that the “longer the working hours, the higher were levels of perceived work stress and turnover intentions.” Birdseye and Hill (1995) add; as per their findings, “workload was consistently and negatively related to their turnover variables”. The result of Bashir and Ramay (2008) indicates that ‘work life policies determine organizational commitment’; which is identified to be a predictor of turnover intentions. The findings of Batt and Valcour (2003) institutes that, “job security predicted lower work-family conflict and lower turnover probability”. “Resilient employees perceived lower levels of work stress, experienced fewer physical/psychological symptoms and less turnover intention, and even reported higher levels of job satisfaction, work-life balance, and higher levels of family satisfaction and job performance” (Oi-ling & Phillips 2006).

C. Job Satisfaction

Okpara (2004) defines job satisfaction as an “affective reaction to a job that results from the person’s comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired, anticipated, or deserved.” According to Perie and Baker (1997) “job satisfaction is an affective reaction to an individual’s work situation”. Birdseye and Hill (1995) based on their study find ‘job satisfaction to be negatively related to all three turnover variables’. The studies by Shields and Price (2002), Riley (2006), Karatepe and Kilic (2007) and Rahman, Naqvi and Ramay (2008) yield that, ‘employees who are satisfied with their jobs are less likely to have turnover intentions’. Moreover, the research work by Shalley, Gilson and Blum (2000) further indicates that ‘individuals reported higher satisfaction and lower turnover intentions when their work environments complemented the creativity requirements of their jobs’. As per Côté and Morgan (2002) ‘the containment of unpleasant emotions decreased job satisfaction, which in turn increased intentions to quit’. Likewise McConnell (1998) hypothesizes that “when an employee's values were attained, job satisfaction rated higher and job turnover was less frequent”. Okpara (2004) adds that ‘dissatisfaction may have an impact on performance, absenteeism, and staff turnover’. Camp (1993) differs to the above discussed notion, as per his findings “job satisfaction does not even demonstrate a significant relationship with turnover”. The research work by Yasbek (2004) also yields that “job satisfaction does have a clear negative relationship to absence and turnover”. “The consequences of low job satisfaction could lead to higher work absence rates, lower work performance, and most importantly, lower quality of services” (Abu-Bader 2005). Balfour and Wechsler (1996) yield “whether dissatisfaction with supervision will lead to increased turnover intent depends on individual perceptions of opportunities for advancement and on how much the job contributes to personal growth and learning”. The findings of Lucas, et al. (1987) reveal that ‘most sales managers attempt to reduce turnover through measures such as improving the job satisfaction of salespeople’. The study of Bhagat (1983) purports that ‘behavioral consequences of reduced job involvement, impaired performance effectiveness, and reduced job satisfaction would lead to absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover’. Bloom and Michel (2002) maintains that “high-pay-dispersion organizations may experience higher turnover because their pay structures violate this equilibrium, which in turn, creates dissatisfaction among managers forced to accept both lower status and substantially lower compensation.”
H3: Job satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intentions.

III PARTICIPANTS

For this study, sample respondents were randomly chosen from among the population of students completing their professional education while being an employee of some organization. The cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad were the geographical limits of the study. Participants were presented the questionnaires along with an affixture, in which they were assured of confidentiality to minimize the probability of any data contamination. To avoid any further oversights due to any non-serious attitude, we tried to utilize the time off of employees to fill the questionnaires. The response rate was not quite encouraging; as many of the respondents even being assured of confidentiality were shy considering that some of the survey items were somewhat sensitive, consequently only 101 employees out of an aggregate of 350 agreed to fill up and return the questionnaire.

IV VARIABLES INCLUDED (QUESTIONNAIRE APPENDED)

A. Turnover Intentions

Turnover intentions were measured using a two-item questionnaire developed by Paré, Tremblay & Lalonde (2001). For this questionnaire, the responses were rated on a five point Likert type scale format. The first item of the questionnaire ranged 1=never and 5=always. And the second item varied from 1=most unlikely to 5=most likely.

B. Work Life Policies

This study used the questionnaire developed by Paré, Tremblay & Lalonde (2001) for the inputs on work life policies. The Likert type scale used a choice from 1 to 5 (with 1=never and 5=always).

C. Job Satisfaction

The survey items developed by Brown & Peterson (1994) were used to assess the job satisfaction level among the respondents. In this questionnaire the continuum again ranged from 1 to 5 (with 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree).

V METHODOLOGY

After the collection of data, scores were developed for the chosen constructs by averaging the responses to items comprising each dimension i.e. CWLP, JS and TI. Then on acquired means, different analyses were employed particularly correlation and regression, to study the presence of relationships (if any) and their strength and significance along with the direction of the relationship between:

i. CWLP and TI (H1),
ii. CWLP and JS (H2) and
iii. JS and TI (H3).

VI RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Conflicting Work Life Policies</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Turnover Intentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting Work Life Policies</td>
<td>2.576</td>
<td>.728</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>2.817</td>
<td>.756</td>
<td>-.687**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover Intentions</td>
<td>3.292</td>
<td>.389</td>
<td>.388**</td>
<td>-.543**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Number of Respondents = N = 101
A look at Table 1 illustrates that CWLP holds a positive correlation with TI (H1) (Konrad & Mangel 2000, Paré, Tremblay & Lalonde 2001, Karatepe & Kilic 2007 and West 2007). Moreover validity of H2 can also be observed as CWLP maintains a negative relationship with JS (Oi-ling & Phillips 2006). Contrary to the findings of Camp (1993) the table also admits the practicability of H3 i.e. JS has inverse correspondence with TI (Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann & Birjulin 1999, Shields & Price 2002, Riley 2006, Karatepe & Kilic 2007 and Rahman, Naqvi & Ramay 2008); among the working students in Pakistan.

**Table 2 – Regression Model for H1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R square</th>
<th>Adjusted R square</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.142</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>β</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.388</td>
<td>17.595</td>
<td>.000(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.195</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Predictors: Turnover Intentions (Constant), Conflicting Work Life Policies

The value of R square in Table 2 depicts that CWLP explains nearly fifteen percent of TI among the working students of Pakistan; which is contradictory to the findings of earlier researchers (Karatepe & Kilic 2007, West 2007, and Kenexa Research Institute 2007) who identified CWLP as a worthy determinant of TI.

**Table 3** suggests that CWLP accounts for almost forty seven percent of variation in JS among the sample population.

**Table 4 – Regression Model for H3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R square</th>
<th>Adjusted R square</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.295</td>
<td>.288</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>β</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-.543</td>
<td>41.453</td>
<td>.000(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-6.438</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Predictors: Turnover Intentions (Constant), Job Satisfaction

Finally, a glance at Table 4 reveals that JS predicts approximately thirty percent out of the remaining eighty five percent, of the reasons for developing TI among the sample population.

**VII DISCUSSION**

The eccentricity in behavior among the working students can be observed in the relationship between CWLP and TI. According to the study not only the relationship between the two is a weak one but also the potency of CWLP to determine TI among the chosen sample population. The research model with a strong backing from results suggests that CWLP can only lead to TI through the mediation of JS and its solo status in this particular model is not of considerable importance and worth. A plausible explanation in author’s view for the aforementioned eccentric behavior among working students is that in the chosen geographical context, the financial outlook of many does not suggest higher education to post graduate or even the graduate level. This situation calls for students to earn to make their ends meet, they may go for jobs which demand extra fatigue and are comparatively...
more strenuous in nature which may include call centre attendants (catering American and European markets), sales representatives and commission agents etc. Although this disturbs their JS levels (because of work life conflicts) but this situation rarely is escalated to a point where they develop TI because they are bound to work to earn their way out. Even in cases where TI develops, they seldom lead to actual turnover.

Moreover, another reason for CWLP to be unable to strongly predict TI among the sample population is that some of the working students think of work life conflicts as an inevitable by-product of their job. This understanding is somehow pragmatic in the chosen geographical context as there are numerous openings in the market but there is hardly a job for a student that does not result in a clash between education and work life.

VIII RECOMMENDATIONS

Griffeth & Gaertner (2001) suggest, “Organizations that want the turnover rate low are advised to pay close attention to their human resource management systems with perceived fairness”. Although the root cause for TI in this particular research model is CWLP that is mediated by JS but the irony of situation is that working students develop TI more because of lower levels of JS than the anticipated CWLP. Even though the CWLP cannot be completely avoided in the case of working students but their effects can be countered by improving the JS level using methods/techniques like:

i. Just distribution of work load,
ii. Counseling and empathetic discussions,
iii. Making the work place environment congenial and affable,
iv. Incorporation of flexible benefits and flextime at the job (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris & Weitzman 2001),
v. Introduction of any kind of motivational packages e.g. pay increments, bonuses or job involvement and management by objectives techniques etc.

IX CONCLUSION

“There is no-one-size-fits-all solution to the issue of work life conflict” (Higgins, Duxbury and Lyons 2007), therefore different strategies can be engaged to satisfy heterogeneous employees. It is also important for western readers to bear in mind that some of the above mentioned recommendations are considered to be an implicit and understood part of an organization’s daily routine in the developed countries, but are not considered worth implementing in organizations, in a developing country like Pakistan which as per Aycan, Kanungo, Mendonca, Yu, Deller, Stahl and Khurshid (2000) is an ‘under researched country’.

Moreover students in developed countries who are unable to meet their expenses go for any available job ranging from being a paperboy, a bartender, to even being a janitor due to a common level of acceptance among the public. But the acceptance level for such jobs among students themselves in general and masses in particular in the chosen geographical context amounts to almost nil. As there are a limited job slots available for students in an economy like Pakistan’s therefore the students in order to meet their expenses must stick to a job at hand which however is strenuous, demanding fatigue and have a conflicting nature but has a common acceptance among the masses and students themselves.

X REFERENCES


XI APPENDIX

Job satisfaction (Brown and Peterson 1994)

i. I sometimes feel my job is a waste of time (R).
ii. My job is very worthwhile.
iii. My job is better than most.
iv. My job is worst than most (R).

Work-life policies (Paré, Tremblay & Lalonde 2001)

i. Managers allow generally enough time for the completion of projects so that employees can do good quality work with limited stress.
ii. I often feel like there is too much work to do (R).
iii. My organization provides work conditions (e.g., flexible schedules, child care facilities, and telecommuting programs) which take into account the emergent needs of employees.
iv. My work schedule is often in conflict with my personal life (R).
v. My job does affect my role as a spouse and/or a parent (R).
vi. My work has negative effects on my personal life (R).

Turnover intentions (Paré, Tremblay & Lalonde 2001)

i. How often do you feel like quitting your job in this organization?
ii. How likely is it that you will actually leave your organization within the next year? (R): items needed to be reversed