Intent to Leave Versus Intent to Stay in Technology Organizations

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ABSTRACT

The intention to leave a job and the intention to stay at the job are considered the best predictors of staff turnover or retention. Based on this assumption, this study is aimed at analyzing the relationship between demographic variables (employee age, gender, marital status, kinship responsibility, education level), attitudinal variables (job satisfaction, affective commitment to organization, carrier commitment) and behavioral intentions (employees' intention to leave the job and employees' intention to stay at the job). From June to December 2016, on-line questionnaires were applied to knowledge-intensive organizations employees in Florianópolis, Santa Catarina State, Brazil. This article discusses the results and presents suggestions for further investigation.

KEYWORDS

Affective Organizational Commitment, Behavioral Intentions, Carrier Commitment, Intention to Leave the Job, Intention to Stay at the Job, Job Satisfaction, Knowledge-Intensive Organizations

INTRODUCTION

The Information Technology (IT) sector generates more than 1.3 million jobs in Brazil. Data from the Association for the Promotion of Excellence in Brazilian Software (SOFTEX) point to a deficit of more than 48 thousand professionals, which can result in an estimated revenue loss of about US$ 30 billion for the sector by 2020. The lack of IT professionals increases the competition for these professionals and is a warning to companies to implement human resources policies to maintain these professionals (Harden, Boakye, & Ryan 2018). The loss of skilled and experienced employees can also affect overall productivity, profitability and product quality (Noor, Zainuddin, Panigrahi, & Rahim, 2018, Harden, Boakye, & Ryan 2018).

Factors that influence the employees’ intention to leave the job do not necessarily influence their intention to stay at the job (Bello, 2017). Although there is also no complementary relationship between these two constructs, they are the best predictors of staff turnover or retention (Steil, Penha, & Bonilla, 2016). Failing to attract and maintain qualified personnel was considered the number one issue in the Conference Board’s 2016 survey of global CEOs, proving more important than economic growth and level of competition (Keller & Meaney, 2017). While this is a recent research topic, there

DOI: 10.4018/IJHCITP.2020040106

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is a growing number of empirical studies building evidence on what factors influence the intention to stay and to leave of technology professionals (Gupta & Singh, 2018, Noor, Zainuddin, Panigrahi, & Rahim, 2018, Harden, Boakye, & Ryan, 2018). As technology organizations seek to retain these professionals, understanding what factors determine the intention to leave and the intention to stay in the organization can help in this process. These contributions may be useful for directing future theoretical and empirical research on behavioral intentions related to the voluntary behavior of staying and leaving technology organizations.

While the results of recent studies on the topic are promising, a solid understanding of the constructs of interest only can be obtained with the accumulation of new evidence. The research question of this study is, then: what is the relationship between demographic variables, job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, carrier engagement and the intention to leave and the intention to stay in technology organizations? The objective of the study is in demographic (age, gender, marital status, level of education, and kinship responsibility) and attitudinal (job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, carrier engagement) factors since previous research provide preliminary evidence that these factors influence the formation of the intention to stay and leave voluntarily technology organizations, as we demonstrate in the next section.

**LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

The theory of planned behavior establishes that behavioral intention precedes volitional behavior. The intention to leave the organization is a deliberate desire to leave the job. It is a subjective estimate of the probability of an employee leaving the organization in the near future (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Steil, Floriani & Bello, 2019). It is the strongest cognitive variable that precedes the employees’ effective resignation (Wasti, 2003). The intention to stay in the organization has been defined as the employees’ conscious and deliberate desire to stay in the organization in which they work (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of this research. The model presents the relationships between demographic and attitudinal variables with the intentions of leaving and staying voluntarily in organizations.

*Figure 1. Research model: Relations between demographic and attitudinal variables with intention to stay and intention to leave the organization*
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