



Navigating Turnover: Culture and Job Satisfaction in Listed Companies

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Abstract

Turnover has been a critical concern for all industries. Turnover intention has been known as the best predictor of turnover, which can be influenced by the culture and job attitude of employees. A cross-sectional study was conducted among the employees of a few Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs), where $n=197$. The results supported the hypothesis that the impact of organisational culture and job satisfaction was significant. However, no significant impact of organisational culture and job satisfaction was found on turnover intention. Furthermore, it was found that job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between organisational culture and turnover intention. This means that practitioners in SME should focus on building a healthy organisational culture to improve employees' job satisfaction. Although it was found that job satisfaction is not a significant mediator in explaining the relationship between organisational culture and turnover intention, it can raise awareness among practitioners in SME to focus on other aspects to reduce turnover intention instead of job satisfaction.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction; Organisational Culture; SME; Turnover Intention

Introduction

Over the decades, turnover intention (TI) has been receiving attention from scholars, as it is believed to be the most influential predictor in predicting actual turnover behaviour among employees (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2001). This belief emerged because scholars believe that intention is the final stage of the cognitive process before the actual behaviour is performed (Steel & Ovalle, 1984). This brings the meaning that, when an employee has the thought (cognitive process) of leaving the organisation or looking for another job, the employee is considered to have TI and to be predicted to perform actual turnover soon. Because of the strong influence of intention on actual behaviour, the scholars are interested in studying the factors that could help reduce TI in order to reduce the actual turnover rate in companies.

Organisational culture (OC) is recognised as one of the antecedents of TI. The influence of OC on employees' behaviour could be strong, as it is known as the "glue" to support the whole organisation (Santti *et al.*, 2017). By saying this, OC could support the growth of the organisation in terms of succeeding in achieving organisational goals if the culture is positive and healthy for the employees (Qazi, Miralam & Bhalla, 2017). When employees are found to fit with the culture of the company, their organisational behaviour will be greatly affected, such as turnover (Ehrhart & Kuenzi, 2017). Because of this, the investigation of OC on TI was initiated by scholars (Wong & Cheng, 2020). For example, Park and Kim (2009) concluded that OC (with the dimensions of consensual, rational, developmental, and hierarchical) was found to have a significant impact on TI. Although several studies investigated

actual turnover instead of TI, it was highlighted that differences could be found in two different variables, hence calling for more studies to investigate TI instead of actual turnover.

Other than TI, job satisfaction (JS) is another top concern in organisational research (Gatti *et al.*, 2020). Improving JS can be complicated and difficult because it can only be improved when there is stability in OC that can be accepted by most of the employees (Kankanamge & Sirisena, 2020). In other words, JS can be increased when the employees think that they are fit for the culture of the company. It is believed that the dissatisfaction of employees due to a mismatched culture could lead to a decrease in job performance in the company (Rozanna, Adam & Majid, 2019). Previous studies highlighted the importance of having a positive culture in organisations; however, limited studies were conducted to investigate the role of culture in JS (Sharma, 2017). Therefore, there is a call for future studies to study the impact of OC on JS.

To expand the knowledge of these three variables, the present study investigates the mediating role of JS. It is hypothesised by the authors that JS will be improved when employees perceive a positive culture in the company, which in turn reduces their thinking of leaving the company. JS was chosen as the mediating factor as it is extremely individual based, where the positive feeling in an organisation is highly affected by an individual's values in the organisation's culture (Thiagaraj & Thangaswamy, 2017). In addition to that, JS is believed to motivate the workforce, which helps reduce negative thoughts such as the intention to leave the company (Octaviannand, Pandjaitan & Kuswanto, 2017). However, limited studies were conducted to investigate the indirect effect of OC on TI via the mediating effect of JS (except Niguse, 2019). Most of the past studies focused on studying the direct effects of OC, TI, and JS, respectively. In addition to that, although Niguse (2019) studies the indirect effect, different OC dimensions were involved in Niguse's (2019) study, where it is believed that different dimensions from different theories might generate different results. In addition to that, SME has been facing a great challenge in turnover rate, and that has caused a huge cost on training new employees, developing successors, and other financial costs (Bhatnagar, 2014). Although several past studies on TI had been conducted in SME, inconsistencies of results were found, hence inconclusive (Albalawi *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, this study is intended to reduce the existing gap by studying the mediating effect of JS on the relationship between OC and TI in SME.

Literature Review

OC is known as one of the elements that can develop an interpersonal culture, especially in an organisation that emphasises team orientation (Sheridan, 1992). Because of such influence, it can affect the intention of employees to leave or stay in the organisation. Several scholars have discovered the significant relationship between OC and TI in different contexts. Niguse (2019) revealed that there is a significant direct and indirect effect of OC and TI. This is aligned with another study where Lee, Kim, and Lee (2015) discovered a significant relationship between the two variables in public institutions. These findings are consistently discovered by other scholars, such as Alzubi (2018) and Yeun and Han (2016), where the scholars recognised the impact of positive OC on reducing TI.

The consistency of findings leads to Hypothesis 1: There is a significant impact of OC on TI.

Next, other than TI, OC has been viewed as an important aspect of influencing employees' attitudes. According to Schein (1996), who is an organisational psychologist, OC is known as a culture where a group of employees share and perceive in a similar way in an organisation, which affects their feelings, emotions, and thoughts. JS is known as one of the job attitudes that had been actively discussed among the scholars. As positive OC could improve the intrinsic motivation of employees, scholars believed that JS should be investigated as one of the attitudes related to OC (Silverthorne, 2004). Furthermore, scholars believed that, when the OC is supportive of employees' tasks, it can boost employees' JS as the employees will generate positive feelings in a positive environment (McKinnon *et al.*, 2003). In addition, other scholars discovered that, when the employees can have a shared vision and mission with the company, they tend to experience higher JS as they feel a sense of belongingness by sharing the vision and mission (Chang & Lee, 2007). The discussion leads to Hypothesis 2: There is a significant impact of OC on JS.

Furthermore, JS is also another crucial factor that could affect TI. As JS is related to the positive feeling towards the organisation, it is believed that it has an impact on reducing TI among the employees. This belief is supported by a few scholars. For example, Shah and Jumani (2015) discovered that, when the respondents perceived higher JS, their TI significantly decreased, hence forming a significant negative relationship. This is consistent with the findings of Alam and Asim (2019), where JS has a significant impact on TI among the selected respondents. It is consistently supported that, when employees are happy at the workplace, they are more likely to stay (Huang *et al.*, 2017). Hence, Hypothesis 3 is stipulated as: There is a significant impact of JS on TI.

By researching the significant relationships between OC, JS, and TI, it was believed that JS could be the potential mediator to explain the relationship between OC and TI. This belief was built on the Social Cognitive Theory by Wood and Bandura (1989). Social Cognitive Theory represents a conceptual framework for explaining the mechanisms psychologically through which social-structure factors are linked to organisational performance (Wood & Bandura, 1989). In this model, behaviour, cognitive and other personal factors, and external environments all function as interacting factors that influence each other. Based on this foundational theory, the research framework is built where OC is explained as an external environment, JS as a personal factor, and TI as the behaviour element, as shown in Figure 1. It is believed that these three variables will interact to explain the phenomenon of TI among employees. Hence, Hypothesis 4 is developed as: There is a significant mediating effect of JS on the relationship between OC and TI.

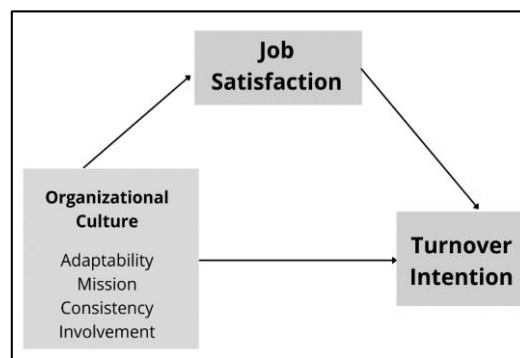


Figure 1: Operational framework

Research Methodology

This study is designed as a cross-sectional study. This study adopted a monomethod for this research project. The monomethod is used for quantitative research to gather primary data from respondents through surveys and questionnaires. This research applied a deductive approach as the research approach. At the beginning, the researchers will have developed a hypothesis based on existing theory or literature, and then researchers need to analyse similar literature to ascertain and utilise the appropriate theory. Participants were from Malaysian SMEs, and they participated in this study voluntarily. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, and 197 sets are usable for data analysis. According to the rule of thumb for sample size estimation for a structural equation modelling analysis (10–20 times of measurable variables) (Martynova, West & Liu, 2018), the minimum number of participants required for multivariate analysis was 128 samples, which was calculated using a-priori sample size calculator with a significance level of 0.05, test power of 80%, and effect size of 0.50. Hence, it is believed that the sample size ($n=197$) was sufficient to conduct this study.

Measurements

OC: In this study, twelve items were adopted to measure OC. This instrument is adopted as it is aligned with the dimensions of OC, namely Adaptability, Mission, Consistency, and Involvement. The examples of items used are as follows: “Value is placed on working cooperatively towards common goals for which all employees feel mutually accountable”; and “The organisation continually invests in the development of employees’ skills in order to stay competitive and meet on-going customers/users’

needs". These items are adopted from Idiegbeyan-Ose *et al.* (2018). Its Cronbach alpha value was 0.951.

JS: In this study, four items were adopted to measure JS. Two items were developed by Blau (1999), while the other two items were developed by Susskind *et al.* (2000). The examples of items used are as follows: "Overall, I am satisfied in my current practice" and "My current work situation is not a major source of frustration in my life". Its Cronbach alpha value was 0.894.

TI: This study adopted the three-item measure of TI developed and validated by Mobley, Horner and Hollingsworth (1978). The examples of items used are as follows: "As soon as possible, I will leave the organisation" and "I will probably look for a new job in the next year". The Cronbach alpha value was 0.912.

Results

Demographics Information

Most were males (54.5%), young adults (44.5% ranged from 26 to 35 years old), single (50%), and had a bachelor's degree (34.2%) as it can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Participants' characteristics

Demographic Aspects	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	89	44.5
	Female	109	54.5
	Prefer not to say	2	1.0
	Total	197	100
Age	15-25 years old	66	33.0
	26-35 years old	89	44.5
	36-45 years old	28	14.0
	46-55 years old	11	5.5
	56-65 years old	1	0.5
	66 years and above	2	1.0
	Total	197	100
Highest educational level	Primary school	5	2.5
	Secondary school	40	20.0
	Diploma/foundation	65	32.5
	Bachelor's degree	67	33.5
	PhD	1	0.5
	Total	197	100
Marital status	Married	96	48.0
	Single	100	52.0
	Total	197	100

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

The mean and standard deviation of the main variables are as follows: OC 3.95 (± 0.78), JS 3.74 (± 0.93), and TI 2.83 (± 1.0). Table 2 shows the correlations of the main variables. TI was negatively but insignificantly correlated with OC ($r = -0.092$, $p > 0.01$), and JS ($r = 0.046$, $p > 0.01$). OC was found to have a significant correlation with JS ($r = 0.660$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 2: Correlations

		OC	JS	TI
OC	Pearson Correlation	1	0.660**	-0.092
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.202
	N	196	196	196
JS	Pearson Correlation	0.660**	1	-0.046
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.519
	N	196	196	196
TI	Pearson Correlation	-0.092	-0.046	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.202	0.519	
	N	196	196	196

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

Validity tests

First, the adequacy was checked using KMO and Bartlett’s test and communalities, followed by convergent validity by looking at the pattern matrix and discriminant validity via the factor correlation matrix. The reliability test using Cronbach alpha was presented under the ‘Measurement’ section. The tables of the mentioned validity test are presented in the appendix.

Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant impact of OC on TI.

Table 3 indicates the regression analysis of Hypothesis 1. As the *p*-value is greater than 0.05 and the *t*-value is lower than 1.96, it can be confirmed that hypothesis 1 is not supported, where there is no significant impact of OC on TI.

Table 3: Hypothesis 1

		Unstandardized	Coefficients	Standardized		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.343	0.407		8.217	0.000
	OC	-0.130	0.101	-0.092	-1.281	0.202

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant impact of OC on JS.

Table 4 indicates the regression analysis of Hypothesis 2. As the *p*-value is lower than 0.05 and the *t*-value is greater than 1.96, it can be confirmed that hypothesis 2 is supported, where there is a significant impact of OC on JS.

Table 4: Hypothesis 2

		Unstandardized	Coefficients	Standardized		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0.589	0.261		2.260	0.025
	OC	0.796	0.065	0.660	12.146	0.000

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant impact of JS on TI.

Table 5 indicates the regression analysis of Hypothesis 3. As the *p*-value is greater than 0.05 and the *t*-value is lower than 1.96, it can be confirmed that hypothesis 3 is not supported, where there is no significant impact of JS on TI.

Table 5: Hypothesis 3

		Unstandardized	Coefficients	Standardized		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.326	0.413		8.049	0.000
	JS	0.030	0.112	0.025	0.264	0.792

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant mediating effect of JS on the relationship between OC and TI.

Table 6 shows the Sobel test result. The Sobel test was conducted to determine the significance of the indirect effects of mediator JS on the relationship between OC and TI. The interactive calculator is employed (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2001). As indicated in Table 6, the *p*-value of the mediation is greater than 0.05, hence showing an insignificant mediating effect of JS, rejecting Hypothesis 4.

Table 6: Hypothesis 4

Mediation path	Test Statistic	Standard error	<i>p</i> -value
OC → JS → TI	0.26779309	0.08917332	0.78885859

Discussion

Hypothesis 1 was not supported, where there is an insignificant impact of OC on TI in SMEs. This means that, whether the OC is supportive of the employees or not, it will not affect the level of TI. This indicates that OC alone has limited power to predict TI in SMEs. As highlighted by Mbah, Ekechukwu and Obi (2018) and Maryati, Panjaitan and Sukmawati (2022), it could be challenging to define a unified OC for all SMEs as they differ in terms of nature of work, different value sets in different areas, and different structures of business. As this study was focusing on general SMEs without segmenting the nature of work, variations in OC might be affected, which contributes to contradictory results.

Hypothesis 2 was supported, where OC plays a significant role in JS. As discussed in the literature review, most of the past studies shared similar findings that OC could improve the level of JS among the employees. Summarising the work of Soomro and Shah (2019) and Salvador, Moreira and Pitacho (2022), the employees tend to have a subjective perception towards the importance of a few elements of OC, for instance, the work structures, the teams in organisations, the encouragement from superiors, and others. These subjective perceptions could contribute to improving JS when the cultures mentioned are healthy and supportive. As OC acts as a shared common value among the employees, the employees tend to have a positive attitude towards their job, which explains the increase in JS (Meng & Berger, 2019; Huang *et al.*, 2024).

Followed by hypothesis 3, it was not supported in this study, where there is a significant impact of JS on TI. It indicates that JS is not able to stand alone in predicting TI among the employees in this study's context. The result contradicts the studies that were discussed in the literature review, where most of the studies supported the significant relationship between JS and TI. The possible reason that contributes to this contradictory finding could be the context of the study, where the present study was conducted in a collectivist country (Malaysia). Summarising from the work of De Clercq, Haq, and Azeem (2019), and Al Issawi and Altaee (2024), the scholars believed that JS can only be powerful in affecting outcomes in collectivist countries when the outcome is related to group settings, such as group performance. Since TI is prone to personal outcomes, it can be explained that the insignificance could happen in this study.

Next, hypothesis 4 was rejected, where there is no significant mediating effect of JS on the relationship between OC and TI. Based on the argument of Baron and Kenny (1986), a mediation link can be significant when there is a significant relationship between an independent variable, a mediator, and a dependent variable. Hence, theoretically, the insignificant mediating effect of JS can be justified the fact that there is no significant impact of JS on TI, as mentioned in Hypothesis 3. While practically, scholars believed that, in an organisation, when employees did not optimally feel JS, the effect of JS might be weak or insignificant in affecting their behavior. From this statement, it is justifiable that JS has no significant mediating effect in this study because the level of JS among the employees was moderate instead of high, hence the employees are not optimally feeling satisfied in their context.

Conclusion

The findings highlighted the significant role of OC in improving JS in SMEs. This highlight can be a reference or hint to the managers in SMEs, where they are advised to focus on developing healthy and positive OC in respective companies to improve the level of JS among the employees in SMEs. To achieve this, the management team at SME could consider developing policies that engage the employees in the decision-making process. This is related to the dimension of involvement in this study, where the respondents rated a mean score of 4.0 for this dimension. Besides, the SMEs can also assist the employees in setting their personal goals that are aligned with the company goals, as the dimension of mission is ranked second highest among the dimensions of OC. Although this study found there is no significant mediating effect of JS on the relationship between OC and TI, this can help the management of SMEs be alert to other possible variables that can improve the relationship between the mentioned variables. For example, instead of focusing on JS, the management might need to investigate group cohesiveness to retain the employees. This is because this study was in a collectivism

country (Malaysia); hence, instead of focusing on the personal goal, which is JS, group cohesiveness might be the potential aspect that could reduce TI.

Although careful measurement was taken, this study is not without limitations, particularly the design of the methodology. First, although the sample size is sufficient, it is rather small. This can affect the accuracy of the prediction of the outcome when regression analysis is done. Based on this limitation, future studies are suggested to test the model by using a larger sample size or different contexts to confirm the relationships between the variables. Second, the generalisation of the findings could be limited when they were tested in a single country. Different countries might have different cultures, which might affect the findings. For example, collectivism countries might focus on group goals instead of individual goals (JS), while individualism countries might emphasise personal goals (JS) rather than group goals, which could cause a different mediating effect on the relationship between OC and TI in this model. Hence, due to this limitation, future studies are suggested to study or compare the model between two different countries with significantly different cultures. Third, this is a quantitative study, where a questionnaire is the only instrument to collect quantified data. This could be limited to gaining an interesting view of respondents to look for the potential reasons for having TI in SMEs. Hence, future studies are recommended to conduct a mixture of quantitative and qualitative studies and have an in-depth interview with selected samples to explore the reasons, particularly the insignificant mediating effect of JS.

Conflict of Interest

The authors affirm that there are no conflicting objectives.

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