

THE IMPACT OF TRUST IN SUPERVISOR ON TURNOVER INTENTION: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AS A MEDIATING MECHANISM

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ABSTRACT

Given employee turnover is still one of the most contemporary worldwide issues facing the hospitality industry, little research has been conducted to investigate the impact of a trusty supervisor on this issue. With a random sample of 448 hospitality employees working in Hurghada (an Egyptian tourist destination), the present study tries to investigate the effect of trust in supervisor and affective organizational commitment on hospitality employees' turnover intention, as well as, the mediating role of affective organizational commitment in the relationship between trust in supervisor and turnover intention. The findings of the structural equation modeling after ensuring the construct validity revealed that both trust on supervisor and affective organizational commitment have negative impacts on turnover intention and the mediating mechanism of affective organizational commitment exists between trust in supervisor and turnover intention. In terms of practical, human resources directors should consider managers/supervisors' ability to increase the trust in their subordinates as a critical criterion of managerial promotions, and the recruiting and hiring process.

Keywords: *Turnover Intention, Trust in Supervisor, Affective Organizational Commitment, Egyptian Tourist Destination, Hurghada, the Hospitality Industry*

INTRODUCTION

In service industries such as the hospitality industry, employee turnover has long been a major interest of researchers, human resource practitioners and managers because of the high costs related to decrease efficiency and diminish productivity, as well as the costs afforded by having to hire and train newcomers (Alharthi *et al.*, 2020; Li, Kim, & Zhao, 2017; Wan & Hsieh, 2013). Turnover Intention (TI) develops slowly when employees are not satisfied with their jobs or committed to their organization, leading the employees to seek for other job opportunities, and actual turnover will be inevitable if they find a better opportunity.

With increasing globalization and international competition (Alareefi *et al.*, 2019; Alsaadi *et al.*, 2019; Widjaja, Khalifa & Abuelhassan, 2019), the importance of recruiting, retaining and managing resources that can help to increase competitiveness of organizations has become a crucial factor in the success of service industries (Abdulla *et al.*, 2019; Alkhateri *et al.*, 2019, Alkathiri *et al.*, 2019a). Organization's competitive advantage is a result of employees' positive work attitudes and contributions (Alharthi *et al.*, 2019; Alshamsi *et al.*, 2019; Sudigdo, Khalifa & Abuelhassan,

2019) has encouraged organizational scholars to understand and clarify the motivational factors to enhance employees' work attitudes (e.g., organizational commitment) and to decrease their intention to quit the organizations (Alkhateri *et al.*, 2018; Widjaja, Khalifa, & Abuelhassan, 2019).

The hotel leaders who are willing to improve levels of subordinate commitment to the hotel are thus facing challenges (Mejia, Wang & Zhao, 2018) what means can be utilized to promote organizational commitment? Research in the past decade has pointed out that in supervisor-employee relationships in managing employees' attitudes, behaviors and intentions (Kang, Gatling & Kim, 2015), supervisors undermining unfavorable employee behaviors and intentions often coexists with showing support and trust. The high quality of the relationship between subordinates and supervisors refers to the high degree of trust and support which is the base for favorite relationships reflects on the relationship between subordinates and organizations (Alshehhi, Abuelhassan & Bhaumik, 2019). Past research found that leadership is pivotal to building trust in organizational settings. For instance, when employees perceive that their leaders care about their interests and treat them fairly, they will tend to

support their leaders in achieving the organizational goals (Alkathiri *et al.*, 2019b). Hence, this paper suggests that if employees perceive supervisor trust, they will be more likely to trust in their organization developing high organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment which refers to what extent an employee has the desire to keep attachment with an organization has three forms of commitment including Continuance Organizational Commitment (COC), Normative Organizational Commitment (NOC) and Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC) (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). Employees having AOC are attracted to organizational goals and values (having affection for their job), employees having COC are fear of quitting the job itself, and employees having NOC are waiting for a better and real job opportunity. It was reported that AOC has the greatest impact on organizations performance (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993; Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982; Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001), thus, this study adopted AOC. Interestingly it turns out employees' TI greatly is influenced by their AOC (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017). Yet, there is no study investigated AOC as a mediator between the TS-TI relationships in the hotel context. Thus, this study tries to contribute to the hospitality literature by investigating the AOC mechanism in mediating the relationship between supervisor trust and employee TI.

Theory and developed hypotheses

(A) Trust in supervisor and turnover intention

The direct supervisors influence the subordinates' daily work life by providing socio-emotional support and taking operational decisions that directly affect that subordinates' wellbeing work life (Abuelhassan & Elsayed, 2020; Costigan *et al.*, 2011). However, it was found that TS has positive impacts on employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance (Mulki, Jaramillo, & Locander, 2006; Wang & Hsieh, 2013), little research has investigated the direct effect of TS on employee TI.

Drawing on the social exchange theory, it is confirmed that subordinates have little intention to quit their organizations when they have a better relationship with their leaders (Alkhateri *et al.*, 2018). Also, it was argued that employees tend to decline their intention to quit their organization when they have trust in the organization and its leaders possessing high integrity and honesty (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Mulki, Jaramillo & Locander, 2006). On the other hand, in a less trusting relationship with supervisors, employees may think helpless, encouraging them to leave, better than putting

their future at risk as an outcome of volatile supervisor behaviors (Costigan *et al.*, 2012). This argument leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis₁: Employees' perceptions of TS have a negative impact on their TI

(B) Trust in supervisor and organizational commitment

Across three public sector organizations, Nyhan (1999) found that TS has significantly a positive impact on AOC, while in another study conducted on two organizations (public and private) by Perry (2004), it was found that TS has an insignificant impact on AOC in the two organizations. Based on the norms of reciprocity in the social exchange theory, when supervisors provide their subordinates favorable treatment, the subordinates show emotional obligation and bond to their supervisor and organization (Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne, 1997). Previous research has supported the association between TS and AOC in past literature. Non-hospitality studies present that supervisory trust boosts employees' job satisfaction and fosters their productive behaviors (Brashear *et al.*, 2003; Mulki, Jaramillo & Locander, 2006). For employees, trust increases their confidence in the supervisor's ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995) which develops positive feelings regarding their job (MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Rich, 2001). Employees are more satisfied with jobs when trust their supervisors (Brashear *et al.*, 2003) and higher satisfied employees have more AOC to their organizations (Boles *et al.*, 2007). Thus, the present study suggests:

Hypothesis₂: Employees' perceptions of TS have a positive impact on their AOC.

a. The Mediating Role of Affective Organizational Commitment

The last two hypotheses aim to test the effect of employees' AOC on their intention to leave their workplace, and the effect of trusty supervisors on employees' intention to quit the workplace through intervening in their emotional bond to their organizations. In other words, the negative relationship between TS and employees' TI may be mediated by the AOC level presented by employees. In Hypothesis₂, it has also confirmed that a supervisor who invests in a high trust relationship with subordinates can enhance their affective obligation to an organization. In several previous studies, the negative link from AOC to TI has statistically been confirmed highlighting that employees who are possessing high emotional bonds with their organization possess difficultly in the intention to leave

their organizations (Demirtas & Akdogan, 2015; Jang & Kandampully, 2018). Particularly, TS can develop a better relationship between employees and their organizations because the employees see their supervisor as an agent of their organization leading the employees too emotionally link their goals and needs to the organizations' goals and requirements which produces high AOC and in results their intention to quit the organization will be very weak. Furthermore, employee AOC can mediate the relationship between favorable leading behaviors (supervisor support) and employee TI (Alkhateri *et al.*, 2018; Fazio *et al.*, 2017). Accordingly, we suggest that:

Hypothesis₃: Employees' AOC has a negative impact on their TI.

Hypothesis₄: Employees' AOC mediates the negative TS-IT relationship.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample and procedure

The population of this study was hotel employees. In the Egypt hospitality industry, the researchers contacted 40 five-star hotels in Hurghada tourist destination, 25 out of 40 hotels accepted to participate in the study. Questionnaires were randomly administered, and the researcher used the employee ID lists provided by HR departments. The participants received a questionnaire with an introduction cover letter. To secure the confidentiality, the participants were informed to place complete questionnaire into a sealed envelope and return them directly to the second researcher's address.

To make sure about the validity and reliability of the survey, the research constructs were adopted from high reputed journals. The original source of the study constructs is English; thus, they were translated from English to Arabic by an academic researcher who was bilingual in Arabic and English. The back-translation procedure is conducted by another bilingual academic to ensure that the translation was proper until a minor revision (Brislin, 1980).

Around 675 employee questionnaires were distributed to hotel employees with an average of 27 questionnaires for each hotel, the valid questionnaires received were 448 sets with the responding rate of 66.37%. The responding sample consisted of 35.5% female and 64.5% male employees which refers that the majority of the hotels' employees were men. The majority ages of the participants range from 25 to 35 years old. The findings present that 41.90% of the respondents were aged 25 to 35 years, 23.70 % of employees are less than

25 years. The employees' educational level is limited by Diploma, Bachelor and Postgraduate (44.30%, 54.90, and 0.80 respectively).

Measurements

The current study has 3 main variables namely trust in supervisor as an independent variable, affective organizational commitment as a mediator variable, and turnover intention as a dependent variable. The first variable (trust in supervisor) consists of 5 items which are developed from (Robinson, 1996), the second variable (affective organizational commitment) consists of 6 items which are developed from (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993), and finally, the last variable (turnover intention) consists of 4 items which are developed from (Li, Kim & Zhao, 2017).

Apart from the demographic variables, the three constructs were measured using 'a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree', throughout the questionnaire. The reliability test is conducted, and the Cronbach's alpha's values ranged from 86 to 92 which exceeded the minimum value of 0.70, indicating high reliability (Hair *et al.*, 1998).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

(A) Construct validity

With some descriptive analysis as depicted in table 1, TI correlated negatively with TS ($\gamma = -0.294, p < 0.01$) and AOC ($\gamma = -0.69, p < 0.01$), while TS correlated positively AOC ($\gamma = 0.32, p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the AVE for every construct higher than 0.5 presents meeting the requirement of convergent and discriminant validity because the AVE values of each construct also are higher than the values of the entire correlations.

Table 1: The results of distributive analyses, discriminant validity and correlations

	Constructs	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1	Affective organizational commitment	4.116	1.207	(0.788)		
2	Trust in supervisor	3.733	1.312	0.324**	(0.767)	
3	Turnover intention	4.831	1.050	-0.686**	-0.294**	(0.787)

Note: The average variance extracted (AVE) is placed between parentheses $p < 0.01$.

Moreover, in table 2, convergent validity is confirmed by another two methods. First, the factor loading of each item in the related construct is higher than 0.50 and significant. Second, the composite reliability of each construct is above 0.60.

Table 2: The Convergent Validity Indicators of the Constructs and Normality

Construct (n=448)	Indicators	Factor loadings	S.E.	t-value	Composite Reliability	Skew	Kurtosis
Turnover Intention	TI1	0.791	0.071	11.14***	0.867	0.193	-0.793
	TI2	0.786	0.073	10.77***		0.194	-0.789
	TI3	0.770	0.071	10.85***		0.203	-0.772
	TI4	0.801	0.069	11.61***		0.205	-0.766
Affective Organizational Commitment	AOC1	0.847	0.058	14.60***	0.907	-0.108	-0.719
	AOC2	0.800	0.065	12.31***		-0.149	-0.714
	AOC3	0.825	0.061	13.53***		-0.165	-0.722
	AOC4	0.746	0.076	9.816***		-0.160	-0.657
	AOC5	0.793	0.076	10.43***		-0.170	-0.692
	AOC6	0.708	0.075	9.44***		-0.140	-0.672
Trust in Supervisor	TS1	0.788	0.080	9.85***	0.876	0.053	-0.665
	TS2	0.878	0.069	12.73***		-0.082	-0.752
	TS3	0.770	0.079	9.75***		-0.023	-0.670
	TS4	0.765	0.077	9.94***		-0.054	-0.746
	TS5	0.610	0.073	8.36***		-0.115	-0.660

Note: *** Significant at the 0.001 significance level

(B) Hypothesis tests

Hypothesis 1 stated that employees' perceptions of TS have a negative impact on their TI. The findings concluded that TS significantly has a negative influence on TI ($\beta = -0.32$, $t = -5.71$). Hypothesis 2 suggested that employees' perceptions of TS have a positive impact on their AOC. The findings concluded that TS significantly has a positive influence on TI ($\beta = 0.35$, $t = 6.48$). Thus, the findings support Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, see figure 1, figure 2 and table 3.

For testing the mediating effect, AOC has to be controlled then the path from TS to AOC has to be significant, as well as, the path from AOC to TI has to be significant as well (Hirst *et al.*, 2016). The findings, in table 3, revealed that the link from TS to AOC is significant ($\beta = 0.32$, $t = 6.28$) and the link from AOC to TI is significant ($\beta = 0.66$, $t = -16.50$), supporting Hypothesis 3 and 4. Furthermore, the link from TS to TI becomes insignificant ($\beta = -0.08$, $t = -1.78$), the indirect effect from TS to TI through AOC is significant ($\beta = -0.214$, $t = -5.94$), and the 95% confidence intervals are free of zero (-0.145; -0.289) lead to the full mediating role of AOC.

(C) Theoretical Implication

The findings from the hospitality context consistent with the social exchange theory presented that trusty supervisor statistically decline employees' intention to quit their hotels. They believe that when their supervisors have integrity, ability, and support then they can build a convenient and safe workplace. This finding agrees with a previous qualitative study (Abuelhassan, Elsayed & Soliman, 2017) conducted in the Egyptian hospitality industry confirmed that when employees have supportive and trusty supervisor they don't tend to experience an attempt with another supervisor in another hotel, even their current hotel financial station is dissatisfied.

The findings also confirmed that TS has a statistical impact on employee AOC, however, it is relatively weak influence but still significant. This result agrees with Nyhan's (1999) study which revealed that TS has a significant influence on AOC in three different public organizations. Meanwhile, the findings confirmed the strong negative relationship between AOC and TI. This result is consistent with the findings of Alkhateri *et al.*, (2018).

The most major contribution in the current study is the confirmation of the mediating role of AOC between TS and TI. The findings revealed that when hotels' employees perceived high trust in their supervisor, they will reciprocate their organization with emotional commitment which leads to low intention to leave the workplace. High employees' AOC developed from supervisors' characters of trust express that employees are highly satisfied with their current job, on the other hand, employees with low AOC due to low trust in their supervisors have great tenacity to quit the current workplace and tries to find other places with pleasant workplace conditions (Acker, 2018; Mullen *et al.*, 2018; Tett & Meyer, 1993). In other words, employees' AOC identifies that the employees associate their needs and goals with the current organizational goals in which these employees have identification with and emotional attachment to their organization and in turn, their desire to leave the workplace is excluded (Fazio *et al.*, 2017; Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Figure 1: Direct Effect Model without Controlling AOC

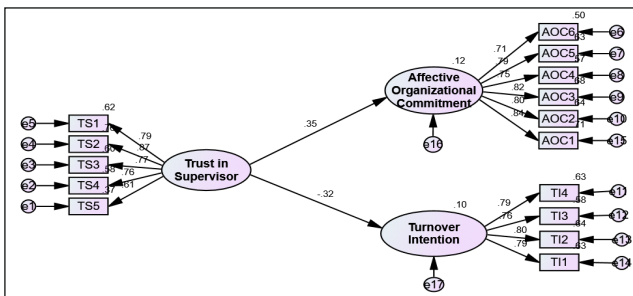


Figure 2: Direct Effect Model with Controlling AOC

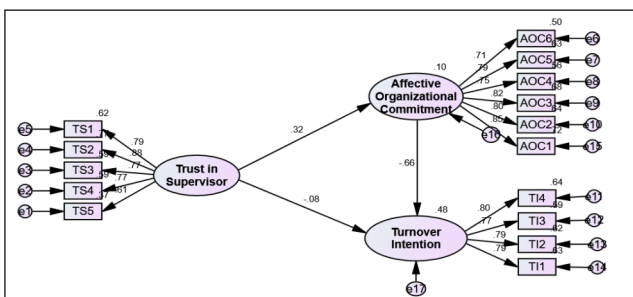


Table 3: The Results of SEM

Effects n = 448	Direct effect model without controlling AOC			Direct effect model with controlling AOC		
	β	S.E.	t-value	β	S.E.	t-value
TS → TI	-0.32**	0.056	-5.71	-0.08	0.045	-1.78
TS → AOC	0.35**	0.054	6.48	0.32**	0.051	6.28
AOC → TI				0.66**	0.040	16:50

Note: *** Significant at the 0.001 significance level; TS = Trust in supervisor; AOC = Affective organizational commitment; TI = Turnover intention.

(D) Managerial Implication

High employee turnover has significant negative effects on hotels' business entails in (1) Increasing the hotels' costs due to consuming HRDs' time and money in selecting, recruiting, and training new employees, (2) Declining service quality and productivity, (3) Losing the opportunity to keep talent employees, (4) Consuming departmental managers' time in seeking on and training new staff rather than implementing hotels' strategies for growth (5) Increasing low employee morale and work pressure, and decreasing the competitive advantage in the market.

The current findings confirmed that trusty supervisor can decrease hotels' employees' desire to leave the workplace through increasing their AOC. Supervisors have a critical act in managing employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance (Abu-Elhassan, Elsayed, & Soliman, 2016; Abuelhassan & Elsayed, 2020). Hotels' management and HRDs should consider supervisors' behaviors among their subordinates. For the current supervisors, they should survey the employees' feelings of supervisor trust. If the survey outcomes highlight some supervisors have a lack of trust relationship with their subordinates, the management should provide these supervisors with some trust-training programs. For the future potential supervisors, the HRDs should consider these supervisors' ability to increase the trust in their subordinates as a critical criterion of recruiting and hiring.

Also, the current findings revealed that employee AOC has a great impact on their intention to quit the workplace. Thus, the hotel management should support other supervisors' behaviors that can enhance employees' AOC such as ethical leaders (Alkathiri *et al.*, 2019a; Alkathiri *et al.*, 2019b), transformational leaders (Alshehhi, Abuelhassan & Nusari, 2019), supportive leaders (Abuelhassan, Alareefi & Abdelgawwad, 2018; Alkhateri *et al.*, 2019; El-Hassan, Elsayed & Soliman, 2015), empowering leaders (Alharthi *et al.*, 2019; Alsaadi *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, in the recruiting process, the HRDs should select and hire employees having needs and goals are matching with the hotels' goals (Alharthi *et al.*, 2020; Alshamsi *et al.*, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The current study was free of common bias, but the data was collected from a single source (employees), as well as this study aimed to investigate the factors influencing the employees' intention of quitting the work. To decrease the common bias potential, researchers should test the impact of TS on actual turnover which can be collected from human resources departments'

documents.

Limitations and future studies

The current findings found that TS relatively has a strong influence on AOC while in a past work (Perry, 2004) it was found that TS has an insignificant impact on AOC. Future research is needed to deeply understand this relationship. Scholars should consider the moderating role of trust in organization or organizational support (DeConinck, 2010; Tan & Tan, 2000). The present study was conducted in Egypt among hotel employees. For generalizing the findings, future studies should change the location and the industry.

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