JOB SATISFACTION AND TURNOVER INTENTION : THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the mediating effect of affective commitment on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention in international school teachers. Data were collected through questionnaire from 80 teachers in an international school in Jakarta, Indonesia, which indicated that affective commitment fully mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Theoretical and practical implications were discussed.

*Keywords : Job satisfaction, affective commitment, turnover intention, international school teacher.*

**Introduction**

International school is an urban phenomenon in non-Western countries as a response to globalization. In the beginning, international schools were intended for foreigners and diplomats to ensure their children to get Western education. Nowadays, international schools also serve local wealthy families who want their children to have international education and continue their study abroad. Teachers are the most important employees that determine the quality of education at any school. Teachers’ competencies of international schools are particularly different from teachers of local schools in terms of educational curricula and intercultural competencies, so it is critical to retain teachers in international schools.

Teachers’ turnover negatively impacts international schools because of high replacement costs such as training costs of new employees, the loss of productivity until the new teachers reach the same level of productivity as teachers who left, and the loss of knowledge carried by teachers who left the school (Cascio, 2005; McKinney, Bartlett, & Mulvaney, 2007; Mobley, 2010).

Before leaving the organizatiom, employees first have an intention to leave (Milovanovic, 2017). Turnover intention is an individual’s desire to leave the organization, comprises of thoughts of quitting, intention to search for another job, and intention to quit (Mowday, 1982). Previous literature has found turnover intentions to be a strong predictor of actual turnover (Jeswani & Dave, 2012). Bester (2012) argued that the turnover intention is the employee's last step in the decision-making process before the employee actually leaves the organization. Employees will show behavioral symptoms that show tendency to turnover, among others are trying to find alternative jobs, easily complaining, feeling unhappy, giving negative statements, are always absent, late and are unconcerned with the organization where they work (Azeez, Jayeoba, & Adeoye, 2016).

Previous research have categorized factors of turnover into two: internal as well as external factors. Internal factors include demographic characteristic (age, education, gender, marital status, income, working period), and personality (Alshammari, Qaied, Mawali, & Matalqa, 2016). External factors include the quality of work life, job attitudes, person organization fit, perceived organizational support, conflict and ambiguity of role, job insecurity, and self development (Alshammari et al., 2016; Azez et al., 2016; Guolaugsdottir, 2016; Mehmood, Ahmad, Irum, & Ashfaq, 2016; Reio & Segredo, 2013; Robbins & Timothy, 2015; Zito et al., 2018). This study is focused on job attitudes, namely job satisfaction and affective commitment, as predictor variables.

Job satisfaction is defined as the general expression of workers positive attitudes built up towards the jobs (Luthan, 2008). Based on turnover survey of international school teachers in USA, 62% of the teachers move to other international schools because of their low levels of job satisfaction (Odland & Ruzicka, 2009). Employees with higher job satisfaction will be happy with their work and are satisfied with their job which impacts the low levels of turnover intention (Amri, Marzuki, & Riyanto, 2017; Putra & Wibawa, 2015; Sutanto & Gunawan, 2013; Takase, Teraoka, & Kousuke, 2015; Waspodo, Handayani & Paramita, 2013; Youcef, Ahmed, & Ahmed, 2016; Firdaus, 2017).

However, results from previous research showed that job satisfaction had small correlation coefficients with turnover intention (*r* = 0.154 – 0.286) (Azeez et al., 2016; Kusumaningrum & Harsanti, 2015; Mathiu & Babiak, 2016; Riadi, 2016; Setiyanto & Hidayati, 2017; Yuda & Ardana; 2017). The above studies indicate that there is an underlying mechanism between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Indeed, previous studies showed that mediators were found between job satisfaction and turnover intention, among others are job stress, motivation, job involvement, perceived organizational support, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational justice and organizational commitment (Alshammari et al., 2016; Candra & Riana, 2017; Emerson, 2013; Saif-ud-Din, Ishfaq, & Adeel, 2016). Candra and Riana (2017) found that organizational commitment partially mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. In this study, we only use one of the components of organizational commitment, namely affective commitment, because affective commitment was found to have the strongest relation to turnover intention compared to normative and continuance commitments (Azez et al., 2016; Kalber & Cenker, 2007; Mehmood et al, 2016; Valéau, 2013; Yustina & Putri, 2017). For that reason, we argue that affective commitment mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Affective commitment is an emotional attachment between the employee and the organization characterized by the employee’s identification with organizational values ​​and goals and involvement with the organization, which lead him or her to stay in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 2007). Thus, this study contributes to the literature by showing the specific mediating effect of affective commitment rather than the total score of organizational commitment.

We employ the theory of organizational identification (Ashforth & Mael, 2004) to explain the mediating effect of affective commitment. Organizational identification is the degree to which the company and the people in the organization share the same values, goals, desires, and aims. As employees share the values of the organization, they start working more like one big team. At this stage, employees identify with the aspects of the organization, and have more pride about the job they do and the organization they work for, thus leads to positive attachment with the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 2004). Based on the organizational identification theory, we argue that employees who are satisfied with aspects of their job, namely the work itself, pay, supervision, promotion, and co worker, will voluntarily identify themselves as part of the organization by adjusting to the values, vision, mission and goals of the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 2004; Haslam, 2004; Kovjavanic, Schuh, Jonas, Van Quaquebeke, & Van Dick, 2012). This identification thus leads to the intention to stay longer in the organization. Hence, they will have low turnover intention (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Kovjavanic et al, 2012). Based on the above argumentation, we hypothesize that: “*affective commitment will mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.*”

**Research Method**

**Participants and procedure**

We employed cross-sectional design with survei method to collect the data. The participants of this study are all 80 Indonesian-citizen teachers of an international school located in East Jakarta. Demographic details such as age, gender, education level, tenure and department were gathered to provide an understanding of the background information of the respondents participating in the study. The questionnaires were distributed by the HR department to all school departments and completed within a time period of two days. All participants completed the questionnaires on a voluntary basis. Confidentiality of the survey was guaranteed to all respondents. The survey was anonymous and the results would only be used for research purposes.

The majority of the respondents were 31-44 years old (*establishment stage*) (Morrow & McElroy, 2010; Pettit, Donohue, & Cieri, 2004), female (64%), bachelor degree holders (80%), and those who are relatively 2-10 working periode (58%).

In this study, we controlled for educational level and tenure since these variables were found to be related to turnover intention in previous studies. Employees with lower levels of education were less likely to have high turnover intention (Stanley, Vandenberghe, Vandenberg, Bentein, 2013). Employees with less of tenure were more likely to have high turnover intention (Bothma & Roodt, 2013).

**Measures**

*Turnover intention*

We used the six-item turnover intention scale developed by Mobley, Horner and Hollingsworth (1978) and modified by Lee, Hung and Chen (2012). The scale was adapted to Indonesian language by Rahmi Khalida (2014). A Likert-type scale with 5-point response ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) was used. An example item is, ‘I am actively looking for another job.’ Coefficient *alpha* of the turnover intention was 0.86 with internal consistency coefficients ranging between 0.621-0.769.

*Job Satisfaction*

The 10-item Job Descriptive Index scale developed by Smith (1969) and revised in 2008 was used to measure five aspects of the job, namely the work it self, pay, supervision, promotion, and coworkers. This scale was adapted by Tonia (2012) to fit Indonesian culture. Items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example item is, ‘The supervision has a very favorable influence to my attitude toward my job”. Coefficient *alpha* was 0.750 and the internal consistency coefficients ranging from 0.364-0.666.

*Affective commitment*

The 6-item *Affective* *Commitment Organization**Questionaire (ACQ)* developed by Meyer and Allen (2004) and adapted by Vicky Fitraza Kosmaya (Kosmaya, 2012) to fit Indonesian culture was used to measure affective commitment. Items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example item from ACQ is, ‘I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization’. Coefficient *alpha* of the affective commitment scale was 0.753 and the internal consistency coefficients ranging from 0.476-0.647.

**Statistical Analysis**

Data were analyzed by using Hayes’ PROCESS macro on SPSS v.23. Mediation effect model was tested using 5000 boostrap sample method with bias-corrected confidence were estimated (Hayes, 2012).

**Result**

***Table 1***

***Result of correlations among study variables***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Variabel | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | Age | 35, 96 | 8, 31 | - |
| 2 | Gender | 1, 64 | 0, 48 | -.044 | - |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Educational Level | 3, 57 | 1, 21 | .230\* | .041 | - |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Tenure | 6, 18 | 4, 87 | .309\*\* | .119 | .035 | - |  |  |  |
| 5 | **Predictor Variable** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Job Satisfaction | 2,67 | 0, 90 | -.086 | .168 | -.328\*\* | .285\*\* | - |  |  |
| 6 | **Mediator Variable** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Affective Commitment | 3,07 | 0, 66 | -.145 | .158 | -.331\*\* | .203\* | .638\*\* | - |  |
| 7 | **Outcome Variable** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Turnover intention | 3,08 | 0,92 | -.121 | -.049 | .224\*\* | -.370\*\* | -.429\*\* | -.495\*\* | - |

N=80. \*\**p<0.01,* \**p<0.05*

Note : Age and tenure were measured in years. Gender was dummy-coded (1 = male, 2 = female). Educational level was dummy-coded (1 = bachelor, 2 = post grad).

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations and correlations between demographic variables (age, gender, educational level, and tenure), predictor variable, mediator variable and outcome variable.

Results show that educational level is correlated negatively with job satisfaction and affective commitment (*r* = -0.328, *p<0.001; r* = -0.331, *p<0,001,* respectively) and positively correlated with turnover intention (*r* = 0.224, *p<0.001*). Tenure is correlated positively with job satisfaction and affective commitment (*r = -0.285, p< 0.001*; *r* = 0.203, *p=0.003,* respectively), and correlated negatively with turnover intention (*r* = -0.370, *p<0.001*).

The results of mediation effect of affective commitment on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention variables are presented in Table 2.

***Table 2***

***Mediation effect of affective commitment***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  | Outcome | |  |  |  |
|  |  | M (Affective Commitment ) | | |  | Y (Turnover Intention) | | |
| Antecedent | | Coeff | SE | P |  | Coeff | SE | P |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Control variables | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Educational Level | | -.0833 | .0444 | .0639 |  | .0548 | .0640 | .3944 |
| Tenure |  | .0241 | .0106 | .0248 |  | -.0408 | .0154 | .0095 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Job Satisfaction | a | .4042 | .0605 | .0000 | c | -.3055 | .0882 | .0008 |
| Affective Commitment | | - | - | - | c´ | -.1535 | .1038 | .1425 |
| Constant | i₁ | 21.385 | .2617 | .0000 | b | -.3760 | .1451 | .0011 |
|  |  |  |  |  | i₂ | 40.919 | .3812 | .0000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | R² = 0,4527 | | |  | R² = 0,3209 | | |
|  | F (3, 95) = 26,1914, P = 0.0000 | | | | F (4, 94) = 11,1047, P = 0.000 | | | |
|  | | | |  |  |  |  |  |

Note. c = *total effect.* c' = *direct effect.*

*Indirect effect* = -0,1520, *Boot SE =* 0,0703, *95% CI* [-0,2998, -0,0251]

Our hypothesis stated that the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention would be mediated by affective commitment. Results as shown in Table 2 showed that the indirect effect of job satisfaction on turnoverr intention via affective commitment was significant (*indirect effect =* = -0,1520, *SE =* 0,0703, *95% CI* [-0.2998, -0.0251). Therefore, our hypothesis was supported by our data. Moreover, we found that affective commitment fully mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, as the direct effect between job satisfaction and turnover intention became nonsignificant (*direct effect* = -0.1535, *SE* = 0.1038*, 95% CI* [-0.3596, 0.0526]).

**Discussion**

This study aims to investigate the mediating effect of affective commitment on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention in an international school in Jakarta. Our findings showed that affective commitment fully mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Our study contributes to the literature by revealing the contribution of affective commitment as an underlying mechanism in job satisfaction-turnover relationship. Both job satisfaction and affective commitment were found to be consistent predictors of turnover variables (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Perryer, Leighton, Firns and Travaglione, 2010), but to our knowledge, this is the first study in Indonesia to investigate the relative contribution of affective commitment over job satisfaction on turnover intention. Previous studies employed social exchange theory to explain the relationship between job attitudes and turnover intention, in which employees who are satisfied with their job will reciprocate the positive feelings by staying in the organization. This type of relationship may last longer only when employees are satisfied with one or more aspects of their job. However, our findings showed that satisfaction with the job may lead to identification with the organization, in which employees feel that they belong to the organization, thus lead to their intention to stay in the organization. This type of relationship is not easy to break even if employees are not satisfied with one or more aspects of their job.

We found affective commitment to fully mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. This is in contrast with previous findings from Hidayat (2018). He found that organizational commitment partially mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.

*Limitations and future research direction*

There are some limitations of this study that need to be mentioned. First, this study used specific samples of one school. Thus, the findings may not be generalizable to other populations. Future research are suggested to replicate the study to other populations to confirm the predictive validity of the study variables. Second, we employed cross-sectional design that limited our ability to confirm the causal relationships between variables. Future research is suggested to use longitudinal studies or experimental studies to establish causal relationship between study variables. Third, we used self-reported measures to measure all study variables that raised the possibilities of the common method bias and social desirability bias (Podsakof, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). In this study, several precautions were taken to minimize common method bias by ensuring the participants that our research was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. To minimize social desirability issue, we ensured them that there were no correct or incorrect answers for the given items in the survey. However, future research is suggested to use others-rating or objective data to minimize the biases.

***Practical Implications***

The findings of this study suggested that it is imperative for the organization who wants to retain their employee to give more attentions to job aspects such as the work it self, pay, work group, supervision, promotion. Employees’ satisfaction with these aspects increases the identification with the organization, and in turn decreases their turnover intention. HR initiatives to increase job satisfaction include increasing supervisor support both on-the-job and off-the job, increasing employees competence, in this case teachers, by sending them to conferences, workshops and any other forms or learning and training, providing clear career path for employees as most of the respondents were discouraged by the lack of progression/promotion opportunities. Other HR initiatives related to rewards are reward for performance and employee recognition for the best teacher of the month.

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