

The Influence of Job Resources and Creative Self-Efficacy on Turnover Intention**

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Abstract: Employee turnover is a continuing issue in Malaysia that challenges employers who wish to retain the best talents in their company. High employee turnover is costly to organisations especially when talent is limited. Additionally, echoing the call by our Prime Minister to steer the country from a knowledge-based economy towards an innovation-led economy, the importance of creativity must be reiterated. This study therefore examines the relationships between turnover intention, creative self-efficacy, job autonomy, and supervisor support. The research demonstrated that both job autonomy and supervisor support are positively related to creative self-efficacy. However, the relationship between creative self-efficacy and turnover intention is not significant. As a result, no mediating relationships were found. This study provides not only theoretical but also practical implications which are useful to human resource practitioners.

Keywords: Creative self-efficacy, job autonomy, PLS-SEM, supervisor support, turnover intention

INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover is a continuous issue in Malaysia and it is troubling employers who wish to retain the best talents in their company. High employee turnover is costly to organisations especially when talent is limited.

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The shortage of talent in Malaysia might drive companies to shift their operations to neighbouring countries in South East Asia such as Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand instead (Nadaraj, 2016). According to the 2017 Hays Salary Guide, 97% of employers in Malaysia are struggling to source for skilled employees (The Star, 2017), indicating that talent is scarce in Malaysia. Therefore, employers should consider reformulating their retention strategies given the increasing talent shortages and increasing rate of globalisation.

Turnover could be either involuntary or voluntary. The issue being examined in this research is voluntary turnover because it is not within the control of the employer. Employee turnover is costly to employers which includes recruitment costs, onboarding costs, and replacement costs for the new hire (Ang, 2014). Such costs are estimated to be between RM25,000 and RM30,000 (Goh, 2012).

Additionally, echoing the call by our Prime Minister to steer the country from a knowledge-based economy towards an innovation-led economy (Malaymail, 2013), the importance of creativity must be reiterated. Therefore, creative self-efficacy should be brought into the limelight. Other than examining the factors contributing to turnover intention, the factors contributing to creative self-efficacy deserved attention as well. A highly self-efficacious employee is more likely to remain longer in organisations and it is therefore important to find ways to nurture creative self-efficacy among employees.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Malaysia has the third highest turnover rate at 9.6% in the South East Asian region (Jayaram, 2015). Furthermore, Watson (2015) reported that the intention of employees leaving their employers have increased from 29% in 2012 to 36% in 2015. Additionally, Goh (2012) reported that 75% of executives are switching jobs within a year. The above statistics are compounded by the increasing brain drain of talents seeping away from Malaysia.

A company may lose talent as a result of employee turnover but a country may lose permanent talent when one leaves a country. It is imperative for employers to stem employee turnover as a starting point to halt the brain drain issue. Employee turnover is therefore a continuing issue for employers in Malaysia given the statistics above. The number of

skilled Malaysians leaving Malaysia has risen by 300% in the last two decades (Boo, 2017; The World Bank, 2011).

Job autonomy (Mughal, 2015), supervisor support (Newman et al., 2012), and self-efficacy (Lewin & Sager, 2010) have been empirically examined, demonstrating a relationship with turnover intention. The potential role of creative self-efficacy as a mediator in attenuating turnover intention is worthy of a study. As said earlier, creative self-efficacy is an important variable to be examined to propel Malaysia from a knowledge-based economy towards an innovation-led economy. This study therefore seeks to investigate the mediating role of creative self-efficacy between job autonomy, supervisor support, and turnover intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature is focused on turnover intention, creative self efficacy, job autonomy and supervisor support. This is followed by underlying theories and research model and hypotheses development.

2.1 TURNOVER INTENTION

According to Takase (2010), turnover intention comprised a multi-stage process which includes psychological, cognitive, and behavioural components in it. Despite the various components embedded in turnover intention, turnover intention basically reflects the willingness of an employee to leave an organisation (Takase, 2010).

In the first stage of turnover intention, it involves a psychological response that triggers the attitudinal withdrawal reactions (Takase, 2010). It is then followed by the cognitive element which represents the intention to withdraw from the employer. The cognitive withdrawal is then followed by withdrawal behaviour. The cognitive withdrawal represents the core of the turnover intention construct.

The antecedents to turnover intention can be categorised along organisational factors (organisational characteristics, organisational climate, and interpersonal relations with organisations), work-related factors (roles, financial rewards, working conditions, and access to power at the workplace), employee factors (demographic factors and attitudinal

factors), and external factors (work/life balance and external job market) (Takase, 2010). Work-related factors shall be examined as the independent variables in this study.

Specifically for this study, job autonomy, and supervisor support are examined as the independent variables. Contemporary researches have shown that both job autonomy (Mughal, 2015) and supervisor support (Newman et al., 2012) are negatively related to turnover intention.

Turnover intention is examined as a proxy of actual turnover because it is more pragmatic to examine the intention of employees rather than to track down employees who have left their employers (Poon, 2012). Furthermore, remedial action can be taken by employers to stem the issues contributing to turnover intention rather than to wait until damages are done.

2.2 CREATIVE SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy is developed from an individual's cognitive and social traits that influence the individual to believe that they have the ability and competence to accomplish a task effectively and successfully (Bandura, 1995; Chong & Ma, 2010). An individual with a high self-efficacy easily perseveres in a challenging environment (Bandura, 1995).

Extending the definition of self-efficacy, Tierney and Farmer (2002) coined the term – creative self-efficacy. Creative self-efficacy is defined as one who believes that he or she has the ability to produce creative outcomes (Tierney & Farmer, 2002).

Both creative self-efficacy and its root form, self-efficacy is a motivational force that drives individuals to persevere in their endeavours (Puente-Díaz, 2016). Lewin and Sager (2010) have demonstrated that self-efficacy is negatively related to turnover intention. Furthermore, Tierney and Farmer (2002) showed that creative self-efficacy is positively related to creative performance. It therefore reflects that creative self-efficacy is related to positive job outcomes.

2.3 JOB AUTONOMY

A job is autonomous when the incumbent has freedom, independence, and discretion in allocating time and deciding on the procedures involved in carrying out their work (Mathisen, 2011; Oldham

& Hackman, 2010). With the autonomy at the hands of the job incumbent, it is a form of resources that could help alleviate turnover intention. From prior researches, job autonomy has been found to be positively related to self-efficacy (Wang & Netemeyer, 2002), creative self-efficacy (Mathisen, 2011), and organisational citizenship behaviour (Park, 2016). On the other hand, job autonomy has been shown to be negatively related to turnover intention (Mughal, 2015).

2.4 SUPERVISOR SUPPORT

Susskind et al. (2003) define supervisor support as the perception of the job incumbent that their supervisor is assisting them to perform their job. A supportive supervisor helps to improve the personal well-being of employees (Babin & Boles, 1996). Prior research have shown that supervisor support is positively related to creative self-efficacy (Chong & Ma, 2010), job satisfaction (Babin & Boles, 1996), and customer orientation (Susskind et al., 2003). On the other hand, supervisor support has been found to be negatively related to role ambiguity, role conflict (Babin & Boles, 1996), and turnover intention (Newman et al., 2012).

2.5 UNDERLYING THEORIES

In this study, two theories are used to explain the causal flow of the variables. The theories are the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2012) and the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Both these two theories are theories which centre around motivation.

The COR theory is a stress model that focuses on the conservation of resources in order to generate motivation (Hobfoll, 2012). Conversely, the depletion of resources produces undesired behaviour. The COR theory helps to explain how job resources at the workplace help to alleviate turnover intention through the nurturing of creative self-efficacy. COR theory is an integration of both stress and motivational theories that can be used to explain people's behaviour (Hobfoll, 2012). In COR theory, self-efficacy is a form of a personal motivational resource (Hobfoll, 2012) which helps explain how it reduces turnover intention. Job autonomy and supervisor support are forms of job resources that help to build the employees' motivational resource, which in turn alleviates any forms of withdrawal intention, which is turnover intention.

Other than COR theory, self-determination theory helps to explain the causal flow examined in this study. Niemiec and Ryan (2009) posited that the cultivation of job autonomy at the workplace assists in building up creative energies.

Self-determination theory looks at both environmental and personal factors that drive self-motivation, social functioning, and personal well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Competence, autonomy, and relatedness are the three important psychological needs that determine how motivated a person is and how mentally healthy a person is (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When those needs are satisfied, an individual gets motivated, engaged, and behaves mentally well. Hence, organisations that wish to motivate their employees, regulate their employees' behaviour and foster mentally healthy employees should satisfy the three important psychological needs among their employees.

Applying the self-determination theory, organisations should design autonomous jobs and provide sufficient supervisor support in order to build up confidence in creativity among employees that could help downplay their intent to withdraw from the workplace.

2.6 RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

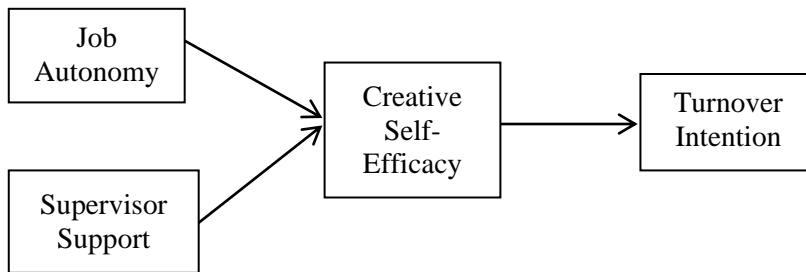


Figure 1: Research Model

Specifically, it is hypothesised that creative self-efficacy serves as a mediator between the independent variables (job autonomy and supervisor support) and turnover intention as the dependent variable. The research model of the study is shown in Figure 1.

Prior researches (Mathisen, 2011; Wang & Netemeyer, 2002) have shown that job autonomy has a positive relationship with both creative self-efficacy and self-efficacy among real estate agents and

manufacturing employees. When job incumbents experience freedom and autonomy in their job, it gives them more leeway in carrying out the work as they wish. The freedom paves the way to the job incumbents to fully utilise their skills, knowledge, and creativity to find the best solution to their work (Wang & Netemeyer, 2002). It also helps to cultivate experimentation, playfulness, and endurance that enable the job incumbent to experience themselves what method works and what does not work, which in turn further increases their efficacy beliefs (Mathisen, 2011). Hence, the following hypothesis is developed.

H1: Job autonomy has a positive relationship with creative self-efficacy.

Chong & Ma (2010) examined employees from financial, business service, telecommunication, and food industries and found that supervisors' supportive and non-controlling management style is a positive predictor of creative self-efficacy. This is because a supportive supervisor who provides useful resources, ideas, and feedback helps improve the ability and confidence of the subordinate in delivering creative work (Chong & Ma, 2010). Hence, the following hypothesis is developed.

H2: Supervisor support has a positive relationship with creative self-efficacy.

In a study among salespeople, Lewin & Sager (2010) found that self-efficacy is a negative predictor of turnover intention. They explained that employees who hold strong efficacious beliefs are better able to stay committed to their work in the face of adversity. Hence, the following hypothesis is developed.

H3: Creative self-efficacy has a negative relationship with turnover intention.

Based on the foregoing justifications hypothesising the relationships between job resources and creative self-efficacy as well as between creative self-efficacy and turnover intention, it is reasonable to state that

creative self-efficacy could play a role as a mediator between job resources and turnover intention. Hence, the following hypotheses are forwarded.

H4: Creative self-efficacy mediates the relationship between job autonomy and turnover intention.

H5: Creative self-efficacy mediates the relationship between supervisor support and turnover intention.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a positivist research relying on a quantitative research method. Questionnaires were distributed on a convenience sampling basis to Malaysian workforce to obtain their responses to the variables of this study.

The study relied on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to simultaneously analyse the relationships among the variables. The SmartPLS 2.0 software (Ringle et al., 2005) was used to apply PLS-SEM into the data. SPSS version 20 was also used for data entry and for analysing the demographic profile of the respondents.

The creative self-efficacy was adapted based on a scale developed by Tierney and Farmer (2002) containing three items. The Cronbach's alpha reported ranged from 0.83 to 0.87. The scale was measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree".

The job autonomy scale was adapted based on a scale developed by Mathisen (2011) containing four items. The Cronbach's alpha reported was 0.81. The scale was measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree".

The supervisor support was adapted based on a scale developed by Susskind et al. (2003) containing four items. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.95 reported by Susskind et al. (2007). The scale was measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree".

The turnover intention scale was adapted based on a scale developed by Jaros and Culpepper (2014) containing five items. The Cronbach's

alpha reported was 0.88. The scale was measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Upon collection of the data, the data are subjected to statistical analysis in order to test the hypotheses developed for this study.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A total of 86 Malaysian employees responded to the questionnaire. The SPSS 20 software was used to obtain the frequencies of the demographic profile. In summary, the majority of the respondents are below 31 years old (66.3%), are male (58.1%), are Chinese (64%), are not married (61.6%), are equipped with diplomas or advanced diplomas (30.2%), are working 12 months or less in their organisation (60.5%), and holding non-executive positions (51.2%).

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF THE MEASUREMENT MODEL

As part of the PLS-SEM analysis, the measurement model is assessed first by assessing the convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability of the constructs.

Convergent validity is assessed by inspecting the factor loadings and the average variance extracted (AVE). Individual factor loadings should be above 0.70 in order to be deemed significant (Hair et al., 2014). Factor loadings which are below 0.40 should be deleted (Hair et al., 2014). There were no factor loadings which were below 0.40.

After inspecting the factor loadings, the AVEs of each construct were inspected to ensure that it is above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2014). Two constructs with AVEs below 0.50 were found. The two constructs were job autonomy and turnover intention. As a result, the lowest factor loadings for each construct were deleted in order to increase the AVEs. JA4 of job autonomy and TI2 of turnover intention were deleted. Upon deletion of the two items, the AVEs for job autonomy and turnover intention increased to above the 0.50 threshold as shown in Table 1 below. As a result, all constructs are convergently valid.

Following the assessment of the convergent validity, the discriminant validity of each construct is inspected. This is done by comparing the square roots of the AVEs with the correlations between the constructs to ensure that the square root of the AVEs is higher than the correlations. As shown in Table 2 below, the square roots of the AVEs, which are bolded, are higher than all of the correlations and thus, supporting that all the constructs are discriminantly valid.

Subsequently, the reliability of the constructs is inspected to ensure that the composite reliability is above 0.60 (Hair et al., 2014). The composite reliability for all constructs is above 0.60. Therefore, the scales used for each construct in this study are considered reliable.

Table 1: Results of Measurement Model

| Variable | Item | Loading | Composite Reliability^a | AVE^b |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------|--|------------------------|
| Creative Self-Efficacy | CSE1 | 0.803 | 0.889 | 0.727 |
| | CSE2 | 0.870 | | |
| | CSE3 | 0.883 | | |
| Job Autonomy | JA1 | 0.827 | 0.767 | 0.542 |
| | JA2 | 0.870 | | |
| | JA3 | 0.430 | | |
| Supervisor Support | SS1 | 0.680 | 0.878 | 0.645 |
| | SS2 | 0.750 | | |
| | SS3 | 0.853 | | |
| | SS4 | 0.910 | | |
| Turnover Intention | T1 | 0.990 | 0.890 | 0.804 |
| | T3 | 0.792 | | |

Note: a. Composite reliability (CR) = (square of the summation of the factor loadings)/{(square of the summation of the factor loadings) + (square of the summation of the error variances)}

b. Average variance extracted (AVE) = (summation of the square of the factor loadings)/{(summation of the square of the factor loadings) + (summation of the error variances)}

Table 2: Discriminant Validity of Variables

| | CSE | JA | SS | TI |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Creative Self-Efficacy (CSE) | 0.853 | | | |
| Job Autonomy (JA) | 0.442 | 0.736 | | |
| Supervisor Support (SS) | 0.294 | 0.313 | 0.803 | |
| Turnover Intention (TI) | 0.077 | 0.058 | -0.227 | 0.897 |

Note: The bolded diagonals represent the square root of the AVEs while the other entries represent the correlations.

4.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

After assessing the measurement model to ensure that the constructs are reliable and valid, the structural model is assessed. The assessment was made using SPSS version 20 and SmartPLS 2.0. In order to assess the structural model, the following are assessed:

- i. Collinearity
- ii. Path coefficients
- iii. Coefficient of Determination
- iv. Effect Size
- v. Predictive Relevance

(1) COLLINEARITY

The first step in assessing the structural model involved assessing the collinearity. The three exogenous variables, which are job autonomy, supervisor support, and creative self-efficacy, are regressed against turnover intention to obtain the variance inflation factor (VIF) values.

The VIF values are 1.28 (job autonomy), 1.118 (supervisor support), and 1.243 (creative self-efficacy). All of the VIF values computed are below 5.0 (Hair et al., 2014) and therefore, there is no condition of collinearity.

(2) PATH COEFFICIENTS AND COEFFICIENT OF DETERMINATION

The second step is computing the path coefficients to test the hypotheses of this study. Bootstrapping was carried out to obtain the path coefficients, standard errors, and the *t* values. Table 3 shows that both job autonomy ($\beta = 5.046$, $p < 0.01$) and supervisor support ($\beta = 1.667$, $p < 0.05$) have significant positive relationships with creative self-efficacy. It therefore shows that H1 and H2 are supported.

However, it was found that creative self-efficacy does not have a significant relationship with turnover intention ($\beta = 0.506$, $p > 0.05$). The mediating role of creative self-efficacy was also examined. Hence, the mediating relationships are also not significant. It therefore shows that H3, H4, and H5 are not supported as shown in Table 3 below.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) for creative self-efficacy is 22.2% and for turnover intention is 0.6%. It means that both job autonomy and supervisor support explain 22.2% of variance in creative self-efficacy while creative self-efficacy only explains 0.6% of variance in turnover intention.

Table 3: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

| Hypothesis | Relationship | Path Coefficient (β) | Standard Error | <i>t</i> value | Decision |
|------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| H1 | JA \rightarrow CSE | 0.388 | .077 | 5.046** | Supported |
| H2 | SS \rightarrow CSE | 0.173 | 0.104 | 1.667* | Supported |
| H3 | CSE \rightarrow TI | 0.077 | 0.152 | 0.506 | Not supported |
| H4 | JA \rightarrow CSE \rightarrow TI | 0.030 | 0.060 | 0.493 | Not supported |
| H5 | SS \rightarrow CSE \rightarrow TI | 0.013 | 0.037 | 0.359 | Not supported |

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

(3) EFFECT SIZE

Apart from statistical significance, practical significance is also important. The effect size is a guide to determine whether the particular path is practically significant or not. The f^2 is relied upon in order to assess the effect size. The effect size is computed manually (Hair et al., 2014) and the formula is shown below in Table 4.

Table 4: Effect Size for Direct Effects

| Relationship | f^2 Effect Size | Magnitude |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------|
| JA → CSE | 0.170 | Medium |
| SS → CSE | 0.034 | Small |

Note: $f^2 = \frac{R^2 \text{ included} - R^2 \text{ excluded}}{1 - R^2 \text{ included}}$

The rules of thumb for f^2 are 0.02 (small), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (large) (Cohen, 1988). From Table 4, it therefore shows that job autonomy ($f^2 = 0.170$) has a medium effect on creative self-efficacy ($f^2 = 0.034$) whereas supervisor support has a small effect on creative self-efficacy. It implies that job autonomy has a higher practical significance compared to supervisor support in influencing creative self-efficacy.

(4) PREDICTIVE CAPABILITY OF THE MODEL

The final step in the assessment of the structural model is assessing the predictive capability of the model. This is done by inspecting the Q^2 (predictive relevance) by using the blindfolding procedure in SmartPLS. The cross-validated redundancy is relied upon to compute the Q^2 . The independent variable is said to have predictive relevance on the dependent variable if the Q^2 is above 0 and vice versa if the Q^2 is below 0.

Two separate blindfolding procedures were calculated for both creative self-efficacy and turnover intention and the Q^2 values are 0.138 for creative self-efficacy and -0.028 for turnover intention respectively. Only the Q^2 value for creative self-efficacy is above

zero and therefore, it indicates that the path has predictive relevance. However, the Q^2 value for turnover intention is below zero and thus, it shows that the path pointing towards turnover intention has no predictive relevance. It is therefore consistent with the non-supported hypothesis on the relationship between creative self-efficacy and turnover intention.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study has revealed that both job autonomy and supervisor support are positively related to creative self-efficacy. Thus, it corroborates past studies that both these two variables are positively related to creative self-efficacy (Chong & Ma, 2010; Mathisen, 2011; Wang & Netemeyer, 2002). The result signals the need for organisations to provide the freedom to employees to decide on how they carry out their work in order to nurture the development of creative efficacious employees. An autonomous job increases the confidence among employees to be creative in making judgements and decisions. The result also implies that it is important for organisations to have supervisors providing creative ideas, resources, and constructive feedback in order to encourage the development of creative efficacious employees at the workplace.

Additionally, this study showed that there is no significant relationship between creative self-efficacy and turnover intention. As a result of the non-significant relationship, there is no mediating effect in this study. Since Lewin and Sager (2010) had shown that self-efficacy is negatively related to turnover intention, the result of the current study came as a surprise. The most plausible reason for the non-significant relationship between creative self-efficacy and turnover intention is because of the high numbers of non-executive employees responding to this study, which consists of 51.2%. Non-executive respondents perhaps face limited job opportunities and thus, having higher or lower creative self-efficacy does not influence their intention to change jobs. As an example, Trevor (2001) showed that those with lower levels of education have lower turnover intention due to lesser job options. It might explain the reason why creative self-efficacy has no effect on turnover intention for this study.

In regards to effect sizes, comparing between job autonomy and supervisor support, job autonomy has a stronger effect on creative self-efficacy. It is more important to place higher emphasis on designing autonomous jobs if an organisation wishes to elicit higher creative self-efficacy from its employees. Besides job autonomy, having a supportive supervisor is important to increase the level of creative self-efficacy among employees.

There are limitations in this study that readers should pay attention to. The first limitation is that the respondents in this study were chosen based on a convenience sampling. Thus, the findings of this study could not be generalised to all Malaysians. It is suggested that future studies be undertaken to overcome the limitation of this study by using a probabilistic sampling when it is practical to do so.

The second limitation is that the respondents in this study were not restricted to any specific industry or positions which could help to control for a homogenous sample. It is suggested that future studies be undertaken by restricting the respondents to a specific industry or positions to obtain a more homogenous sample.

In conclusion, it has been empirically shown that both job autonomy and supervisor support are important job resources at the workplace because they are positively related to creative self-efficacy. Therefore, human resource practitioners should design autonomous jobs and encourage supervisors to support their subordinates in order to develop higher creative self-efficacy.

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