

The Relationships of Trust in Supervisor, On-the-Job Embeddedness, and Intentions to Leave: Testing the Mediating Effect of On-the-Job Embeddedness

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Abstract

Much work has been done on the voluntary turnover topic in over than 50 years, yet much work has to be done to understand the phenomena. Mitchell and Lee (2001) marked the first comprehensive work to try to understand the phenomena of leaving by asking why people stay instead of why people leave. They introduced the term *job embeddedness*, that represents influences from supportive others on an employee's decision to stay in the organization. The present study aimed to investigate the relationships of trust in supervisor, on-the-job embeddedness, and intention to leave. We hypothesize the mediating effect of on-the-job embeddedness in the relationship between trust in supervisor and intention to leave. Data were collected using self-reported, cross-sectional questionnaire among 500 employees in a restaurant chain in Jakarta. The result showed that all dimensions of on-the-job embeddedness correlate either positively and negatively with intentions to leave and trust in supervisor. On-the-job embeddedness also plays an important role as a mediator on the relationship between trust in supervisor and intention to leave. Further results are discussed.

Introduction

Much work has been done on the voluntary turnover topic in over than 50 years (e.g., March & Simon, 1958; Mitchell & Lee, 2001; Price & Mueller, 1986), yet much work has to be done to understand the phenomena. Mitchell and Lee (2001) marked the first comprehensive work to try to understand the phenomena of leaving by asking why people stay instead of why people leave by introducing *job embeddedness*, that represents influences from supportive others on an employee's decision to stay in the organization. These influences can be work-related (on-the-job embeddedness) as well as non-work-related (off-the-job embeddedness), such as family, friends, community involvement, and job tenure. The two factors of on-the-job embeddedness and off-the-job embeddedness are further divided into three facets of attachment: *fit*, *links*, and *sacrifice*, forming six dimensions of job embeddedness, namely *organization fit* (fit with the organization), *community links* (connection with people in the community), *organization sacrifice* (what one may forfeit if he/she leaves the organization), and *community sacrifice* (what one may forfeit if he/she leaves the community).

Intention to leave precedes actual voluntary turnover, in which actual thought is being given to evaluating the new job alternatives in order to leave the organization or the profession (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979). This study focuses on intention to leave as an alternative to understand why people stay and leave.

Among other antecedents of intention to leave, trust in supervisors has been proven as an important antecedent by some researchers (e.g., Mishra and Morrissey, 1990; Tan & Tan, 2000). However, Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner (2000) in their meta-analysis of antecedents and correlates of employee turnover, found small to moderate effect sizes of leadership (supervisory satisfaction and leader-member exchange) to turnover, and demonstrated that leadership can be presumed as one of the distal causes of turnover (e.g. Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Price & Mueller, 1986). Thus, the purpose in the present study is to offer new theoretical insight on the role job embeddedness as a potential mediating variable between trust in supervisors and intention to leave.

Most of the employees at the company we studied were young people under the age of 26. They were still in the stage of financial need period, making them more likely to view work as a support of life. According to Zhang, Fried, and Griffeth (2012), for such employees, on-the-job embeddedness is more likely to influence turnover than is off-the-job embeddedness. Our hypothesis is that on-the-job embeddedness fully mediates the relationship between trust in supervisor and intention to leave.

Method

The study is conducted in a well-known restaurant chain with more than ten branches in Jakarta only. Number of participants included in the study is 500. Table 1 shows an overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants. All participants completed the questionnaires on a voluntary basis. The survey was completed during work days within a time period of two weeks. Completion of the self-report questionnaires took approximately 20 minutes. Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of all the study variables.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

	<i>N</i>	%
Age		
< 26 years	344	68.8
26 – 35 years	147	29.4
36 – 55 years	9	1.8
Gender		
Male	295	59
Female	205	41
Length of work		
< 2 years	288	57.6
2 – 10 years	157	31.4
> 10 years	55	11

Note. *N* = 500

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