

Perceived Family-Supportive Work Culture, Affective Commitment and Turnover Intention of Employees

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Abstract: The objective of this research is to examine the role of perceived family-supportive work culture in reducing turnover intention of employees and the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship between perceived family-supportive work culture and turnover intention. The subjects in this study constituted 693 employees from 20 private service organizations in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Results of multiple regression analyses indicate that perceived family-supportive work culture is positively related to turnover intention of employees and employees' affective commitment mediate the relationship between perceived family-supportive work culture and turnover intention. The results imply the need for employers to understand how employees view the family-friendly programs in terms of the support provided and the values they place on the programs as captured in perceived family-supportive work culture. Positive perceptions would help reduce turnover intention as well the affective commitment of employees.

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1. Introduction

Employee turnover is a persistent problem in organizations since organizations have to deal with costs due to termination, advertising, recruitment, selection, and hiring (Abbasi and Hollman, 2008). Employee turnover may jeopardize an organization's strategic plans to achieve its objectives (Abasi and Hollman, 2008). When an organization loses its critical employees, there might be several outcomes including a reduction in the overall level of innovation and quality of customer service (Denvir and McMahon, 2002; Miller, 2010). According to Garino and Martin (2005), organizations suffer the loss of job-specific skills and disruption in production, and incur the costs of hiring and training new workers when employees leave the organization.

For many years, researchers have tried to understand the major determinants of turnover intention and some managerial implications (Tuzun, 2007) especially with the rapidly changing demography of the workforce including the increase of women workers. Such a change results in more couples having to juggle work and family roles (Aminah and Zoharah, 2008; Perrewé, Treadway and Hall, 2003) and hence it is expected that organizations be more sensitive to employees' family responsibilities and needs outside the workplace.

Consequently, contemporary public and private organizations are increasingly seeking initiatives to help employees balance their work and family responsibilities that may lead to positive organizational outcomes. One of the initiatives is to offer benefits that are family-supportive. Thompson, Beauvais, and Lyness (1999) introduced the concept of work-family culture which refers to the shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the work-family integration of employees. This concept includes three dimensions namely, managerial support for work-family balance, career consequences associated with utilizing work-family benefits, and organizational time expectations that may interfere with family responsibilities. A supportive work-family culture increases the likelihood that employees will feel comfortable using family-friendly benefits like flextime, as they are less likely to worry about possible negative career consequences (Thompson et al., 1999). Another similar concept, organizational family support, refers to the organization's interest in helping employees achieve work-life balance and it encompasses work-family policies and practices offered by an organization (Allen, 2001).

Previous research have shown that employees who find that their organizations are less responsive to their family needs would be less committed to organizations and hence may leave the organizations (Haar and Spell, 2004; Rothbard, Phillips and Dumas, 2005; Wang and Walumbwa, 2007). In addition, research have also shown that affective organizational commitment, which refers to employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991), is the strongest predictor of organizationally desired outcomes such as employee retention (Allen et al., 2003; Meyer and Smith, 2000; Rhoades et al., 2001) as compared to other forms of commitment, namely normative and continuance commitment. An employee who is affectively committed strongly identifies with the goals of the organization and desires to remain as part of the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1993) and are least likely to leave the organization (Thompson and Prottas, 2005; Gaan, 2008).

Despite the acknowledgement of the importance of workplace culture and studies examining employees' perceptions towards family-supportive culture, there is a need to examine the role of perceived workplace culture in reducing negative outcomes such as turnover intention and increasing organizational commitment since previous studies, with the exception of the work discussed earlier, have focused more on benefits offered rather than how comfortable employees feel using the family-friendly benefits and the values they place on the benefits as captured in perceived family-supportive work culture. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of perceived family-supportive work culture in reducing turnover intention and the mediating role of affective commitment. This study draws upon the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) to examine relationships between these variables. The social exchange theory recognizes conditions under which individuals feel obligated to reciprocate when they personally benefit from another's actions (Lambert, 2000). The social exchange theory can be used to explain the relationships between family-supportive work culture and employees' commitment to organization and turnover intention. Besides this theory, the results of previous research also offer the bases for the formulation of hypotheses.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Perceived family-supportive work culture and affective organizational commitment

Thompson et al. (2004) found that employees who perceive that their supervisors and organization are family-supportive are more committed affectively

to their organization. According to Gibson and Tremble (2006), employees' affective organizational commitment is derived from their perceptions of the extent to which the employer is committed to and supportive of them. Assistance in balancing the demands of work and family life is a promising intervention for improving employee experiences and increasing retention in the organization. Haar and Spell (2004) examined the relationship between the perceived value of work-family practices among employees and their affective commitment and found a significant relationship. Similar findings were obtained by Muse et al. (2008). Thus empirical evidence seems to support the relationship between perceived family-supportive work culture and affective commitment, and the following hypothesis was tested.

H1: There is a positive relationship between perceived family-supportive work culture and affective commitment.

2.2 Perceived family-supportive work culture and turnover intention

Availability of organizational family support (family benefits and alternative schedules) and informal organizational support (work-family culture, supervisor support, and coworker support) have been suggested as a means to reduce employees turnover intention (Gaan, 2008). Previous research indicates that employees who perceive that their organization support them in integrating between work and family responsibilities will have less intention to leave the organization (Allen, 2001).

According Pasewark and Viator (2006), flexible work arrangement, which is part of the work-family support, seem to be effective in reducing turnover intention. Earlier, Thompson and Prottas (2005) investigated the relationships among informal organizational support (work-family culture, supervisor support, and coworker support) and turnover intention. They found that the informal organizational support was associated with reduced turnover intention. Recently, Yanadoria and Katob (2010) examined the effects of work-family support at the workplace in Japanese firms and found statistically significant associations between work-family support and female employee turnover in Japan. Previous research findings seem to support the relationship between work-family support at work place and turnover intention and the following hypothesis was tested.

H2: There is a negative correlation between family-supportive work culture and turnover intention

2.3 Affective commitment and turnover intention

Affective organizational commitment refers to employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Lack of organizational affective commitment has detrimental effects including increase in turnover rate and turnover intention (Baotham et al., 2010). As evident by several studies, affective commitment is negatively correlated with employee turnover intention (Ali and Baloch, 2009; Addae and Parboteeah, 2008; Yeoh et al., 2010). In other words, employees who are more committed to their organizations are less likely to leave the organization. Since employees' affective commitment could be a predictor of turnover intention, the following hypothesis was tested:

H3: There is a negative correlation between affective commitment and turnover intention.

2.4 Affective commitment as a mediator in the relationship between family supportive work culture and turnover intention

Besides examining the magnitude of the perceived family-supportive work culture and turnover linkage, this present study also examined the mediating role played by affective commitment in this relationship. Based on the literature review as has been discussed earlier, perceived family-supportive work culture is related to affective commitment and the latter is also related to turnover intention. Drawing upon the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) positive employee outcomes (e.g. organizational commitment and employee retention) could be achieved in response to benefits provided by organizations. Based on previous findings and the social exchange theory, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between perceived family-supportive work culture and turnover intention

3. Materials and methods

3.1 Sample

A total of 693 employees from 20 private service organizations in the Klang Valley, Malaysia, participated in this study. Only organizations with a minimum of 100 employees were included in this study since larger organizations are more likely to provide support in the form of family-friendly policies such as flexible work and child care arrangements than smaller organizations, while smaller organizations will adhere to basic requirements such as leave arrangement and medical

coverage (Wood et al., 2003; Dulk et al., 2005). According to Poelmans et al. (2003), the provision of such support depends on several factors including organizational size. Forty employees from three categories, namely (1) managerial and executive, (2) supervisory and technical and (3) clerical and other support staff from each organization, 10 from the first category, 10 from the second category and 20 from the third category.

3.2 Measurement

3.2.1 Perceived Family-supportive work culture

Perceived family-supportive work culture was measured using 18 items from the work-family culture scale developed by Thompson et al. (1999). Three dimensions of work-family culture were measured, namely managerial support, career consequences and organizational time demand. For each support scale, items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree; high scores represented more managerial support, career consequences and organizational time demand. Examples of items are: "The higher management in this organization encourages supervisors to be sensitive to employees' family and personal needs" and "In this organization, employees are encouraged to strike a balance between their work and family lives". The reliability coefficient of the scale was .92.

3.2.2 Affective organizational commitment

Affective organizational commitment was measured using 8 items from Allen and Meyer (1990). The employees were requested to respond using five-point scaled response options ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Examples of items include "I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization" and "I feel emotionally attached to this company". The reliability coefficient of the scale was .87.

3.2.3 Turnover intention

Turnover intention was measured using 6 items, two items were adopted from the instrument developed by Scott, Bishop and Chen (2003), three by Lee and Mowday (1987) and one from Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis, and Cammann (1983). The subjects of this study were requested to respond using five-point scaled response options ranging from very unlikely (1) to very likely (5). Examples of items are: "I often think of quitting my current job" and "I am actively looking for a job with another company". The reliability coefficient (alpha) of this scale was 0.92.

3.3 Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated to describe the main characteristic of the respondents. Correlation coefficients were computed to examine the relationships among family-supportive work culture, affective commitment and turnover intention. A series of regression analyses was employed to test the hypotheses of the study. Baron and Kenny (1986) recommended the use of a series of regression models to test mediational hypotheses. First, regressing the mediator on the independent variable; second, regressing the dependent variable on the mediator; third, regressing the independent variables on the dependent variables and fourth, regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable and the mediator. The following are the four conditions for establishing mediation: (1) The independent variable significantly affects the dependent variable; (2) The independent variable significantly affects the mediator; (3) The mediator significantly affects the dependent variable; (4) The effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable shrinks upon the addition of the mediator to the model. If the independent variable does not affect the dependent variable upon regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable and the mediator, then full mediation is established. If otherwise, the test supports partial mediation.

4. Results

The respondents' age ranged from 18-57 years ($M = 32.35$, $SD = 8.56$). About two-fifths of respondent belonged to the 26-33 age group. There were about equal proportions of females (50.5%) and males (49.5%). Managerial and executive staff constituted 32.2% of the total respondents, supervisors and technical 16.2%, and clerical and other support staff 51.6% (Table 1).

The mean score for perceived family-supportive work culture was 3.25 ($SD = 0.43$), affective commitment 3.57 ($SD = 0.70$) and turnover intention 2.60 ($SD = 0.82$) (Table 2). Correlational analyses results revealed that perceived family-supportive work culture was positively related to affective commitment ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$) and negatively related to turnover intention ($r = -0.28$, $p < 0.01$) (Table 2). Affective commitment was negatively related to turnover intention ($r = -0.49$, $p < 0.01$) (Table 2). The results show that an increase in employees' scores of perceived family-supportive work culture leads to an increase in affective commitment and a decrease in turnover intention. An increase in affective commitment leads to a decrease in turnover intention. These results support H1, H2 and H3.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	%	Mean	SD
Age (years) (n = 680)			32.35	8.56
≤25 years old	154	22.2		
26 - 33 years old	281	40.5		
34 - 41 years old	131	18.9		
42 - 49 years old	75	10.8		
≥ 55 years old	39	5.6		
Gender (n = 693)				
Male	343	49.5		
Female	350	50.5		
Job category (n = 684)				
Managerial and executive	220	32.2		
Supervisory and technical	111	16.2		
Clerical and other support staff	353	51.6		

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of the variables

Variable	1	2	3	Mean	SD
1 Turnover intention	1.00			2.60	0.82
2 Affective Commitment	-0.49**	1.00		3.57	0.70
3 Perceived family-supportive culture	-0.28**	0.31**	1.00	3.25	0.43

** <0.01

Table 3 presents the results of the regression analyses ($N = 693$) testing whether the relationship between perceived family-supportive work culture and turnover intention is mediated by affective commitment.

Step 1: Effect of perceived family-supportive work culture and turnover intention (Fig.1a) is statistically significant ($\beta = -0.28$, $p < 0.01$), satisfying step 1 of Baron and Kenny's method.

Step 2: Statistically significant effect of perceived family-supportive work culture on affective commitment ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$) (Fig. 1b), meets the stipulation of this step.

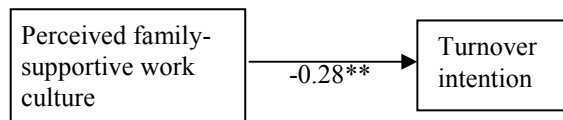
Step 3: The effect of affective commitment on turnover intention is statistically significant ($\beta=-0.44$, $p<0.01$). This relationship is independent of the association between perceived family-supportive work culture and turnover intention.

Step 4: The effect of perceived family-supportive work culture on turnover intention shrinks upon the addition of affective commitment (the mediator) to the model (bottom of Fig. 1b), ($\beta=-0.15$, $p<0.01$) and this is consistent with mediation. Since the perceived family-supportive work culture does affect the turnover intention upon regressing the turnover intention on both perceived family-supportive work culture and on affective commitment, then partial mediation is established. Hence, the results support H4.

Table 3. Regression Analysis

Step	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	β	R ²
1	Perceived family-supportive culture	Affective commitment	.31**	
2	Affective commitment	Turnover intention	-.49**	
3	Perceived family-supportive culture	Turnover intention	-.28**	
4	Perceived family-supportive culture Affective commitment	Turnover intention	-.15** -.44**	.26

(1a)



(1b)

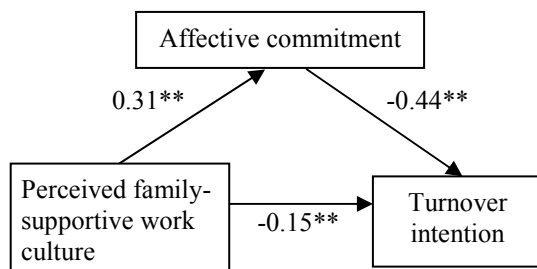


Figure 1. Regression analysis results.

(1a) portrays the simple model of perceived family-supportive work culture, affective commitment and turnover intention.

(1b) depicts the full model that includes affective commitment as the mediator.

Table 3 shows the results of regression analyses. The regression analysis between perceived family-supportive work culture and turnover intention has an R^2 of 0.08. Adding affective commitment to the model increases the value of R^2 to 0.26. Thus the change in R^2 associated with adding affective commitment is 0.18. The inclusion of affective commitment in the model accounts for an additional 18% of the variance in turnover intention.

5. Discussion

The findings that perceived family-supportive work culture is a significant and negative predictor of turnover intention have also been reported by Thompson and Prottas (2005) and the social support-commitment relationship has also been reported by other researchers (Gaan, 2008; Pasewark and Viator, 2006). The findings of this study show that employees who perceive that their organizations are supportive of their family needs are less likely to leave the organizations. With regard to perceived family-supportive work culture and its association with affective commitment, this study found that an increase in perceived support by managers or organizations led to an increase in affective commitment. These findings are consistent with the findings of Allen (2001) and Haar and Spell (2004). Similar findings have also been reported by O'Neill et al. (2009). In other words, employees who receive support to manage their work and family lives are more committed to their organizations and are more likely to stay in their organizations.

The significant relationship between affective commitment and turnover intention is consistent with the results reported by Baotham et al. (2010) whereby individuals with higher levels of affective commitment tended to report lower levels of intention to leave. Similar findings have been reported by Addae and Parboteeah (2008), Ali and Baloch (2009) and Yeoh et al. (2010).

With regard to the mediating effect of affective commitment in the relationship between perceived family-supportive work culture and turnover intention, the results show that employees with more positive perceptions of organizational support tend to experience higher levels of affective commitment and this would in turn decrease their levels of intention to leave the organization. Theoretically, the findings have shown that the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) offer a theoretical guide to understanding the outcomes of perceived family-supportive work culture whereby positive employee outcomes (e.g. organizational commitment and employee retention) could be achieved in response to benefits provided by organizations.

The findings of this study have important implications for organizations. The findings demonstrate that employees' perception of organizations' family-supportive culture is an important factor that is related to employees' affective organizational commitment and turnover intention. Given that turnover is a serious problem since it involves costs due to termination, advertising, recruitment, selection, and hiring (Abbasi and Hollman, 2008), identifying factors that could further explain turnover is an important attempt. Employers should also look into the possibility of developing family-friendly practices that are sensitive to employee family needs to assist employees in managing work and family roles such that employees will not be hesitant in associating themselves with such practices since employers will be perceived as supportive. With this supportive perception there is a greater tendency for employees to be more committed to the organization and an increased likelihood to remain in the organization.

The implication for future research is that, when exploring the influence of family-supportive work-life programs or practices on attitudes (e.g. commitment and turnover), it is meaningful to explore how employees view the work-life programs or practices besides examining the practices or the offering of programs. Simply offering work-life programs does not necessarily mean that employees find the organization supportive of their work-life needs (Thompson et al., 1999).

Several limitations of this study should be noted. First, a significant limitation of the present investigation is the sample size that was utilized. The results reported here may only be generalized to employees working in private service organizations located in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Caution must be exercised in generalizing the findings from this sample to employees in other organizations such as manufacturing organizations. There is also a need for future researchers to examine the work culture perceptions and its effects on employees' organizational commitment and turnover intention in other industries such as the manufacturing industry which is another important industry in Malaysia. Second, the inferences drawn from this study are limited by self-report data and cross-sectional characteristics of the data.

6. Conclusion

We could conclude that perception of family-supportive work culture is an important antecedent of turnover intention and affective commitment is a mediator in this supportive culture-turnover relationship. An employee who perceives that there exists family-supportive culture in an organization, characterized by high responsiveness to

work-family issues, seems to be more likely to remain in the organization and have a greater sense of affective commitment to the organization.

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