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Justice Perceptions and Intention to Quit in IT-ITES Employees in India

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Abstract:
Intention to quit and employee turnover are some of the most researched topics in organizational behavior. Many researchers have explored the linkage between justice perceptions and intention to leave. This paper is focused on role of demographic variables in justice perceptions and intention to quit in IT-ITES industry in India. Indian IT-ITES industry has seen significant growth in the past decade and is expected to touch around USD 90-100 billion by 2020 in India (NASSCOM-McKinsey's Perspective 2020 Study). HR Managers in India are dealing with a dual challenge of meeting hiring targets on one hand and controlling turnover on the other; which ranges between 20%-40%. Hence understanding the reasons for turnover is very important especially when greater number of young Indian professionals are joining IT-ITES industry year on year. For this study, a sample of 401 responses across 6 locations covering 7 IT-ITES were collected and analyzed. The results indicate that the turnover intention of the IT-ITES professionals is influenced by their perceived justice of equity rule and demographic variables like age, gender, education and tenure in the organization. Age was found to have an inverse relationship with Intention to quit. The younger employees were found to have higher intention to quit as compared to employees with higher age. In terms of gender, females found it difficult mange household responsibilities especially w.r.t. life events like marriage, childbirth, etc. and were found to have higher intention to quit as compared to male employees. Employees with higher qualification had higher intention to quit as they desired higher job responsibility and complex assignments. Employees with lesser tenure in the organization possessed higher intention to quit as compare to the employees with higher tenure with the organization. There are implications for Managers, as they need to adopt different engagement and retention strategies w.r.t. demographic profile of the employees. Hence the understanding the demographic factors like age, gender, education and tenure will enable the organizations plan better HR interventions to retain their qualified skilled force.

Keywords: Organization justice, procedural justice, distributive justice, age, gender, education, tenure, intention to quit

1. Introduction

The Indian IT-ITES market has been experiencing a gradual upswing since a decade. The growth and sustenance of IT industry in India rests largely on the IT knowledge pool and it is considered to be the chief driver of the industry (NASSCOM, 2005). According to NASSCOM-McKinsey's Perspective 2020 Study, the addressable market for domestic IT-ITES services outsourcing will touch around USD 90-100 billion by 2020 in India. The growth in the IT industry in India is putting demands not only on hiring IT professionals but also on retaining them. The turnover in the industry is ranging between 20 and 40per cent in some organizations (Atlas, 2005). The cost associated with employee turnover is very high. These costs include the cost of recruitment and training of employees (Alexander et al., 1994), loss of firm-level social capital (Dess and Shaw, 2001), decrease in temporary productivity (Osterman, 1987), decrease in customer service levels, lower company profits, and cause training and expatriation losses (Hom et al., 1988) and loss of important tacit knowledge (Droege and Hoobler, 2003). Hence, it is very important for organizations to understand the underlying factors leading to employee turnover.

Given the importance of the topic, Intention to quit, and employee turnover are some of the most studied topics in organizational behavior (Hom and Griffeth, 1995; Lewis and Park, 1989; Steers and Mowday, 1981). Early research on organizational justice focused on outcomes (Adams, 1965), which are most often conceptualized as the ratio of one's inputs to outcomes (Adams & Freedman,

1976). Most of the studies on employee perceptions of equity focused on factors like their impact on tenure intention (Gregory & Albrittton 2010).

Existing literature suggests that intention to quit is an important predictor of employee turnover (Griffeth & Hom, 1995; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). In particular, intention to quit has been considered as a proximal antecedent, since it captures employee's perceptions and evaluations of job alternatives (Allen, Shore, &Griffeth, 2003; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979). Past studies of organizational justice have identified two major types of justice perceptions: distributive justice, which refers to the fairness perception of outcomes; and procedural justice, which refers to the fairness perception of procedures used to decide the outcome allocation. Dailey & Kirk (1992) explored effects of justice perceptions on intention to quit. Early studies on organizational justice were primarily concerned with distributive justice, grounded in Adam's (1965) equity theory. Distributive justice was found to be related to such work outcomes as pay satisfaction, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and trust in organization (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).The focus of justice research later shifted to procedural justice (e.g. Leventhal, Karuza, & Fry, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975) when scholars noted that distributive justice could not address an individual's fair procedure pursuit (Greenberg, 1990). In the organizational context, procedural justice is considered an important resource in social exchange. It influences employee's judgment of the quality of exchange relationship with their organization (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000). Fasolo (1995)claimed that procedures may be evaluated by employees as discretionary actions on the part of the organization, and allowing employee's voice in decision-making procedures signify the organization's concern and care for the employees.

The turnover research has focused on factors influencing attraction and retention of qualified professionals include such factors as gender, age, experience, tenure, geographic location, discipline and employer incentives (Krecker 1994; Proenca & Shewchuk 1997; Harrison & Hubbard 1998; Hall et al. 2007).

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis

Literature review reveals that the different emphases given by different demographic and personality groups to justice issues affect fairness perceptions (Brockner & Adsit, 1986). For example, Leventhal and Lane (1970) predicted and found that males and females differently adhere to the equity rule of justice. Specifically, whereas male's major concern in reward allocation was protecting their own interests, female's major concern in reward allocation was maintaining the welfare of all group members. Brockner and Adsit (1986) found gender differences in the saliency of distributive justice, such that males reacted more strongly than females to inequitable outcomes. Major and Adams (1983), documenting repeated findings of gender differences in reward allocations, offered and examined two additional explanations for gender differences in justice perceptions. One was the self-presentation perspective, according to which there are normatively different expectations of males and females for reward allocation, with women expected to be generous and men expected to be equitable; and the other was the cognitively oriented perspective, according to which the genders differently evaluate their inputs. According to this explanation, females are expected to perform more poorly than males and attribute their success to external rather than internal factors.

In line with existing categories in the literature (Porter & Steers 1973; Robinson & Pillemer 2007; Gow et al 2008), for this study, demographic variables include age, gender, education level, and tenure in the organization.

2.1. Age

Age has frequently been identified as influencing turnover rates (Igbaria & Guimaraes 1993; Krecker 1994; Harrison & Hubbard 1998; Lonne& Cheers 2000; Boxall 2003), more specifically, turnover rates generally decline with age (Porter et al. 1974; Krecker 1994; McNearney et al 2008). Furthermore, Johnson (2001b) found that job rewards were less important to younger workers. Hence, it has been suggested that flitting between jobs prior to settling down is the norm for workers in their late teens and twenties (Taylor 1978). This suggests that intention to quit could be moderated by age. Hence we hypothesize that:

- H1: The intention to quit differs among employees with different age groups.

2.2. Gender

Gender has consistently been found to affect turnover (Igbaria & Guimaraes 1993; Boxall et al. 2003; Kuzyk 2008). It has been suggested that women tend to have higher turnover rates than men (Gow et al. 2008). This link can be demonstrated through the consistent positive relationship between absenteeism and attrition (Somers 1996).Some studies suggest that women report higher levels of turnover intentions (e.g., Miller & Wheeler, 1992; Moncrief, Babakus, Cravens, & Johnson, 2000) and actual turnover (Mano-Negrin, 2003), than men. Other studies on gender and turnover also established that women are more likely to quit than men (Schwartz, 1989). Hence we hypothesize that:

- H2: The intention to quit differs between female and male employees.

2.3. Education

Employee education levels have also been identified as influencing a person's decision to leave or stay in an organization. More highly-skilled employees were more likely to stay, particularly for reasons such as job satisfaction rather than external factors, and the reverse was true for the lower skilled employees (Igbaria & Guimaraes 1993; Parks & Waldo 1999; Sourdif 2004). Moreover, those with a higher school education reported higher levels of work, persistence (McDonough 2007). This is not surprising when we consider that completion of higher school education requires persistence. Hence we hypothesize that:

- H3: The intention to quit differs among employees with different level of education.

2.4. Tenure

The tenure in an organization has been consistently linked to retention and attrition. It has been found that longer tenured employees were more likely to stay with an organization. Rates of turnover have been found to be significantly higher amongst those with shorter tenure (Somers 1996; Hall et al. 2007). Moreover, it was reported that a worker's previous tenure with an organization was a good predictor of the tenure possible in their current job (Davies & Shackleton 1975). Consequently, tenure is viewed as an important variable, potentially predictive of turnover (Waters et al. 1976; Marsh &Mannari 1977; Igbaria & Guimaraes 1993; Parks & Waldo 1999; Hall et al. 2007). Hence we hypothesize that:

- H4: The intention to quit differs among employees with different level of tenure

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

Questionnaire-based survey was used for data collection across IT-ITES organisations across six locations in India. Total number of variables involved in the study was 17 with 56 items in the survey questionnaire. Data from 401 questionnaires were used for the final analysis.

3.2. Measures

Standard Scales were used for measurement in the study. The responses were obtained using 5-point Likert-type scale where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. The distributive justice variables were used from five item measure of Niehoff and Moorman (1993). The measure of procedural justice was a used from Moorman (1991). The reported Cronbach's Alpha for the scale was in the range of 0.92 to 0.94. Intention to quit was measured by three items developed specifically for the study (McCloskey and McCain 1987): "This organization is a wonderful place to work for next 5-7 years", "This organization requires some improvements for capable people to continue to work here" and "This organization needs significant improvements for capable people to continue to work here". The cronbach's alpha of the scale in the study was 0.88. Also, five items were included to collect the demographic information such as age, gender, qualification, and years of experience with the organization.

3.3. Description of the Sample

Data from 401 questionnaires were used for the final analysis. This section gives a descriptive analysis based on data. Out of the 7 organisations from which data were collected, all were services organisations. The average age of the sample is 35.7 years out of which, 25% belonged to 20-25 years and 25-30 years each, 34% were in the range of 30-35 years, 9% belonged to 35-40 years and 7% were in 45 years and above category. Of the sample, 72 percent of the respondents were males and the rest were females. In terms of education 36% of the employees were graduates, 32% postgraduates and 32 % had specialised degree like C.A., C.S, P.hd. etc. In terms of tenure with the organization, 33 percent of the respondents were less than 2 years with the organization, 45 percent of the respondents were between 2 to 5 years and 21 percent of the respondents were more than 5 years with the organization.

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

The preliminary data analysis involved analysis of descriptors by mean and standard deviation. The Cronbach alpha value was checked for each variable to ascertain internal consistency. The t-test was used to determine whether there is a significant difference between two sets of scores. ANOVA test was performed to compare the means of more than two groups or levels of an independent variable.

4. Results

The results of mean analysis in Table 1 show that the employees at age between 21 to 30 years have higher intention to quit compared to 31 to 40 years age group and employees with age more than 40 years.

Variable	Age Groups	N	Mean	Combined Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Intention to Quit	21-30years	208	3.213		0.982	3.802	0.023
	31-45years	139	2.986		0.927		
	> 45 years	54	2.895	3.091	0.793		

Table 1: Anova test statistics for Intention to Quit among different age groups

The perception regarding intention to quit differs among employees with different age groups (F= +3.802, p=0.023), refer Table 1, which supports H1 i.e. the *intention to quit differs among employees with different age groups.*
The results of mean analysis in Table 2 show that females have higher intention to quit compared to male employees.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Combined Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Intention to quit	Male	272	3.017	3.133	0.969	-2.294	0.022

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and T-test for Intention to quit between Gender

The perception regarding Intention to quit differs between gender (T= -2.294, p=0.022), refer Table 2, which supports H2, i.e. *the intention to quit differs between female and male employees.*

The results of mean analysis in Table 3 show that professionally qualified employees have higher intention to quit followed by graduates and post graduates.

Variable	Level of Education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Intention to Quit	Graduates	184	3.199	1.021	4.736	0.009
	Post Graduates	189	2.945	0.870		
	Professional Qualification	28	3.369	0.793		

Table 3: Anova test statistics for Intention to Quit among different level of education

The perception regarding intention to quit differs among employees with different level of education groups (F= 4.736, p=0.009), refer Table 3, which supports H3 i.e. *the intention to quit differs among employees with different level of education.*

The results of mean analysis in Table 4 show that employees with 0-2 years tenure with the organization have higher intention to quit compared by 2-5 years tenure and >5 years tenure with the organization.

Variable	Tenure Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Intention to Quit	0-2 Years	134	3.189	0.898	29.132	0.000
	2-5 Years	181	3.063	0.949		
	>5Years	86	3	1.011		

Table 4: Anova test statistics for Intention to Quit among different tenure

The perception regarding intention to quit among employees with different level of tenure with the organization (F= 29.132, p=0.000), refer Table 4, which supports H4 i.e. *intention to quit differs among employees with different level of tenure.*

5. Discussion

As discussed above, age, gender, level of education and tenure with the organization play a crucial role in intention to quit. The results show that there is a significant difference in intention to quit among the different age groups. At younger age, the employees are more concerned about their career and have greater zeal to explore growth opportunities. They are professionally mobile and may have higher intention to quit in their current organization. The literature has also supported the notion that employees in different age groups have different intention to quit (Mitchel et al., 2001 and Javad and Premrajan, 2011). The literature also confirms that the higher level of age is inversely associated with intention to quit (Manlove and Guzell; 1997).

In line with the past literature, the result of this study revealed that gender has been found to affect intention to quit (Boxall et al 2003; Gow et al 2008 and Kuzyk 2008). It was found that female employees tended to have higher intention to quit than male employees (Lambert, 2006). Sabharwal and Corley (2009) found that female employee's marital status and children may impact their job satisfaction and intention to quit. The literature has revealed that female employees have greater difficulty in maintaining their work life balance than male employees. The difficulty in maintaining work and family life balance, perception lower opportunity to perform and skepticisms regarding discriminations against male members creates lower job satisfaction, organizational commitment and higher intention to quit the organization (Mattis, 1990).Research has suggested that these findings may be due to job dissatisfaction on the part of women (which could be related to the lower level positions commonly held by women) or because women have lower earnings and fewer opportunities for advancement (e.g., Blau & Kahn, 1981). Some may speculate that these findings are related to statistical discrimination theory which suggests that employer's experiences may cause them to expect women to leave an organization sooner than men (Konrad & Cannings, 1997). Others have found that women experience a greater number of "shocks" or events that force them to decide to leave the organization (e.g., pregnancy and birth of a child) (Donnelly & Quirin, 2006).

The intention to quit differs among employees with different education levels. The literature also supports the notion that employee education levels have been identified as influencing a person's intention to quit (Lambert, 2006). Some authors found that more educated employees are more likely to stay, particularly for reasons such as satisfaction with job authority and responsibility, chances for career development and rewards. While the less educated employees do not get equal or high chances for such a growth in job levels or rewards, which motivate them to leave for other opportunities lying in the market (Sourdif, 2004). Other streams of researchers also indicate that highly educated employees have higher tendency to quit than less educated employees (Mitchell et al., 2000). They have better external opportunity for personal growth in terms of higher pay or other promotions, which might motivate them to leave the current job to grab market opportunity. Furthermore, higher education can broaden one's horizons, creating new ways of thinking and feelings of entitlement. This raises a person's expectations, which, if not met, leads to higher intention to quit the current organization.

The results of the study reveal that perception regarding intention to quit differs among employees at different levels tenure. The literature also confirms that longer tenured employees are more likely to stay with an organization (Miller and Wheeler, 1992; Krecker, 1994; and Lane, 1998). Rates of turnover have been found to be significantly higher amongst those with shorter tenure (Hall

et al. 2007). One rationale for this could be that longer-tenured workers have more investments or side-bets in the organization and are consequently less likely to leave the current organization.

6. Implications for Managers

The results indicate that the turnover intention of the IT-ITES professionals is influenced by their perceived justice of equity rule and demographic variables like age, gender, education and tenure in the organization. There needs to be different engagement strategies w.r.t. demographic profile of the employees. For example, for younger and less tenured employees, Managers need to understand Gen Y aspirations and expectations from job. Also Managers may need to focus on additional support in terms of coaching and mentoring for younger and less tenured employees, while for older and more tenured employees, the focus may be on keeping them engaged with more challenging projects and assignments. In terms of gender, Mangers face the common challenge of catering to different needs between male and female employees. Managers need to create a culture of sensitivity and appreciation for female employee's special needs, e.g. maternity, flexibility at work; while advocating meritocracy, irrespective of gender. Also top management may want to drive a culture of diversity and inclusion. Similarly, hiring managers need to carefully decide the qualification criteria so that overqualified candidates are not hired for less complex jobs. Level of education and experience should correspond to job complexity.

7. Conclusion

This study has attempted to study the role of demographic variables in influencing employee's intention to quit in in IT-ITES sector in India.These observations are particularly important in technically-skilled employees in IT-ITES sector in India. For the graduate engineer trainees (GETs) there needs to be a higher focus on employee engagement through latest technology platforms, projects involving exposure and learning. Employees with these skills have high job mobility and if employees perceive distributive and procedural inequities, they may have high intention to quit. In terms of gender, mangers need to adopt practices which assure confidence in female employees for pay equality, posting on key assignments and workplace equality. There is a need for an inclusive culture which supports their special needs like Childcare at the office, flexible work schedules (compressed work time-longer days, working from home etc.). Right hiring in terms of level of education is important to keep employees engaged. Organizations need do a balancing act by using innovative means to engage Gen Y employees and provide stretch roles for tenured employees. These observations made in the study are very crucial and recommend that reporting managers should make conscious efforts to understand the demographic profiles and their drivers.With the unique competitive advantage in IT-ITES industry in India on the global landscape, these recommendations are very relevant in managing intention to quit and reducing employee turnover.

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