

Moderating Impact of Internal communication on the relationship between Job stress and Intention to Leave: An emperical study on front office public sectors

Okta P. Bayu Putra¹, Nugroho J. Setiadi¹

¹Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta 11530, Indonesia

E-Mail: oktas_bayuputro@binus.edu

Yohannes Jhony Kurniawan²

²Sekolah Tinggi Taranita

E-Mail: jhony@starki.id

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the moderating impact of internal communication on the relationship between work stress and employee intention to leave the company. The framework proposed in this study was to study the impact of occupational stress factors on employee intentions to leave work, especially for front-line employees at several public sector companies. Data were collected from 125 front office employees. Data on internal communications, and how they affect the relationship between work stress and their intentions of leaving the job, are collected using a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were reported, followed by factor analysis, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation and hypothesis testing using hierarchical multiple regression. These findings can be used by companies or company management to take the necessary approaches to reduce high turnover rates in their companies.

Keywords: Communication, Job Stress, Intention to Leave

Introduction

Competition between companies in this era of globalization is so tight. Every company must work optimally in order to compete with its competitors. In order to have a high competitiveness, the company is required to have competent human resources. Employees are the backbone of every industry, especially service-based organizations where employees are the main resources that are on the front lines of the company to run the company's business operations. In order to realize the ambition, the company charged its employees with a pretty heavy task. They must provide the best service to their customers, besides they must also obey their direct superior to fulfill their duties. A large task with each deadline becomes daily consumption for front office employees. Of course, these pressures can cause work stress for employees.

The problem of job stress does not look at the individual role, place of work, and individual position in the company. All employees can experience work stress. The increasingly diverse and contradictory demands of the workplace in the workplace, family problems, excessive workload, and many other challenges that create stress are almost impossible to avoid.

Stress has become a corporate problem in many parts of the world. Nowrouzi (2013) revealed that 50% - 80% of illnesses suffered by employees associated with work stress: the higher the employee's work stress leads to worsening health. Researchers from the Bureau of Labor Statistic's Census of Fatal Occupational Injury reported as many as 1700 suicide events occurred in the workplace or office. According to the investigation, the victims experienced exhaustion and prolonged work stress. Fatigue and work stress also infest the employees in Indonesia. Research conducted by the Master of Medicine Program of Medical Faculty of Medicine in 1990 showed that 30% of workers have experienced work stress ranging from mild to severe complaints (Karima, 2014). These data indicate a potential increase in employee stress in the future.

Employees facing various problems, such as job stress and job satisfaction are potentially affected to find better opportunities and leave the company today. The intention of employees leaving the organization is not solely because of salary or wages but rather job stress and frequent miscommunication problems. In fact, employees want their companies to recognize and defend them. Perhaps satisfied employees will easily understand the wishes of their superiors and they remain faithful working in the organization. Even highly committed employees who remain in the company today will have a lot of control over their future in the organization. However, the conditions may be different from the current situation, where the services to customers are increasingly demanded more professionally and quickly. This is what gives an indication of the increasing rate of labor turnover in an organization.

The turnover rate among employees has increased radically in recent years. The turnover rate of the younger generation is higher compared to the older generation and the reason is basically for better opportunities and higher wages from other companies or business organizations. Although the money is one of the main reasons people leave the company, there are several reasons that affect employees' intentions to leave. Employees who are separated from the top management of the company highlight that their reason for leaving is because of the better benefits and privileges offered by other companies than the current company. While professional employees and support staff tend to leave the company for better career opportunity reasons.

The rate of employee turnover and intent to move the workplace is a major issue for any organization. The problem for most of these companies leads to high levels of employee turnover that can lead to service disruptions, customer dissatisfaction and unnecessary costs when companies need to hire, hire, and train new employees. There are various factors that affect employees' intention to leave the company. Factors affecting employees' intentions to change jobs include job stress, job dissatisfaction, low salary and no benefits package, stressful working conditions, work mismatch, poor quality of relations or low-level communications, poor working conditions, lack of organizational commitment and other dispositional factors such as self-esteem, boss support and locus of control. In addition, there are other indirect factors affecting their willingness to get out of work such as the lack of interaction between staff and management, lack of appropriate training for newcomers and an unfavorable work environment, economics, organizational performance itself, a culture adapted within the organization, job characteristics, unrealistic expectations of higher management, demographics and personal aspects of the person.

Based on research conducted by Firth et al. (2004) work stressor affects employees' intention to move to work. This study shows that there is a relationship between employees' intention to leave the company with dispositional factors and job involvement variables although not all dispositional factors contribute to the intention. Dispositional factors such as the employee control locus do not affect the employee's intention to leave his job. However, the above-mentioned studies are conducted in Australia in various industries. Therefore, comparative research on the impact of internal communication mediation is expected to change the direction of the relationship between work stress and employee intentions to get out of work. This study aims to provide a framework for studying the moderating impact of internal communication on the relationship between job stress and employee intent to leave the organization.

Literature Review

Intention to leave

The intention to leave work can be defined as the exit of a person from where he works consciously on his own (Basak, Ekmekci, Bayram, & Bas, 2013). Factors that cause employee intent to leave are low salaries, low benefits facilities, inflexible working hours or schedules, career development prospects, poor management, job stress, family obligation, early retirement, length of service, low level of motivation, emotional exhaustion and physical exhaustion, and poor socialite (Ramamurthi, Vakilbashi, Zaleha, Rashid, & Mokhber, 2016).

1. All of the factors highlighted are still under job commitment, job satisfaction, job stress, a locus of control, self-esteem and social support. In addition, self-esteem and social support are positively related to employee work commitments (Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet, 2004). Whereby employees with high self-esteem is very committed to their work and tasks assigned to them. Perhaps high employee self-esteem and good social support will usually

make them feel at home as employees. They are very happy, satisfied with their work and work environment (Cao, Hirschi, & Deller, 2014).

Job stressor

Work stressors can be defined as scenarios or contributing factors that cause an employee to leave the company. The situation occurs when employees cannot face the challenges of the job, the challenges are beyond their means, unable to keep up with the pace of work and insufficient resources to support their work. Stressors vary from one person to another depending on their personal abilities. Thus there are other sub factors that indirectly affect employees' intentions such as locus of control, internal quality of communication, self-esteem and social support indirectly affect employee's intention to go (Firth et al., 2004).

Job Stress

Job stress is a physical and emotional reaction that arises when the capabilities, resources, and needs of an employee are inconsistent with job demands (Basak et al., 2013). These Negative Impact Symptoms include frustration, worry, anxiety, depression, and many other occupational problems.

Communication

Communication is basic in making connections. The forms of communication may vary, each form having different systems for conveying messages. Different media as a means of communication is usually based on technology that connects communicators and receivers. Communication can occur between individuals or groups and can be immediate or delayed, depending on the form of communication. Communication is an active two-way process which is an exchange of ideas or concepts for information, command and instruction, influence and persuasion (Singh & Raisoni, 2015).

Impact of Job Stress on Communication

Across the globe, stress is recognized as one of the greatest challenges to the health conditions of current employees (Leka, Griffiths, & Cox, 2004). Job-related stress is a product of a natural response to job tasks and challenges that go beyond the knowledge, abilities, and/or what one is comfortable doing (Basak et al., 2013). Stress is present in various work activities. It is more likely to be present or deteriorate when an employee does not feel to have the support of his / her boss/manager and colleagues (Han, Trinkoff, & Gurses, 2015). When an employee is very weak or has no control over his job or approach in solving the challenges and requirements of his job, stress is likely to exist.

The same applies to other types of working pressures (Basak et al., 2013). In everyday life, emotions are essential for interpersonal communication and provide an indication of the individual's mental state (ie if ready to confront or avoid) and reactions to stress (Abualrub & Al-Zaru, 2008). The purpose of this study is to investigate the characteristics and frequency distribution of stress as a factor in influencing attitudes toward communication in employee activities in the front office as a professional function.

Impact of Communication on Intention to Leave

This study was designed to examine the relationship between organizational communication and work-out intentions, using the Satisfaction Communication Questionnaire (CSQ) as a measuring tool. Communication has been identified as one of the predictors of the intention to leave work (Siti Fatimah, 2008). If managers can improve their employee communication satisfaction, it is expected that employees' intention to get out of the organization can be reduced. This study is expected to enrich the understanding of the relationship between communication and employee intentions out of work, especially in the public service sector in Indonesia. The study is also expected to expand the literature research on communication and employee turnover levels in the public service sector.

Impact of Job Stress on Intention to Leave

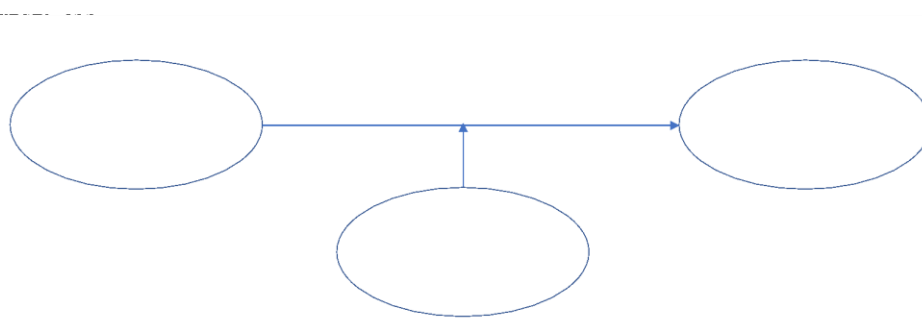
Intention to leave has been an important issue for management for years (Chen, Lin, & Lien, 2011) and this is a big problem for organizations today. Job stress affects employee job satisfaction which in turn leads to low performance

and the intention to leave work increasingly high (Hayes, Douglas, & Bonner, 2015). There are many researchers who find that the greater the amount of stress, the higher the intention of switching employees (Abualrub & Al-Zaru, 2008; Jiang et al., 2017; Labrague, Gloe, McEnroe-Petitte, Tsaras, & Colet, 2018; Park, Yoon, Moon, Lee, & Park, 2017). Live-work conflict, stress, has positive relationship to desire to move (Noor, 2008).

High-stress employees have lower work commitment and satisfaction and thus, increase their intensity to quit their jobs (Azeez, 2016). Employees with high-stress levels have a higher likelihood to leave their jobs (Calisir, Gumussoy, & Iskin, 2011). Nevertheless, job stresses such as role ambiguity, role conflict, work with overload have no direct relation to the employee's desire to get out (Lu & Gursoy, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

2. Previous studies have largely investigated the effect of occupational stressors on intention to leave, but it is not clear how the effects are. Based on the literature, job involvement and job disposition factors are a major factor in intention to leave. Therefore the purpose of this study is to address critical inequalities by reviewing existing research on employee intent to leave work while providing a framework for measuring the effect of work stressors moderated by internal communication. This study contributes theoretically through the development of a conceptual framework to test the moderating effects of internal factors of communication on the relationship between job stress factors and the desire of employees to come out, which provides more insight into this relationship. Figure 1 shows the hypothesized model based on the theoretical framework.



3. Figure 1: Hypothesis Model

Research Methodology

The sample consists of respondents who are front office employees, such as receptionist, cashier, and customer service from four different companies in Indonesia. These organizations are in the form of State-Owned Enterprises and some government agencies are tasked with providing services to the public, such as the population agency, the health service, and the licensing agency. The convenience sampling technique was adopted to identify the organization. Distribution of questionnaires was conducted to collect data from these organizations. The names of the organizations were not disclosed due to anonymity requests made by them. Employee participation in this study is voluntary.

Respondents are asked not to disclose their identity so that their identity is anonymous. They are asked to answer all questions. It takes a maximum of twenty-five minutes to fully respond to the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were collected over the duration of five days from each organization. The survey was conducted using a Design cross-sectional survey. This procedure requires the participation of all parties based on the convenience, willingness, interest, and availability of respondents to obtain quality responses (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Table 1 shows the profiles of respondents.

Table 1. Respondent's profile

Criteria	Percentage
Gender:	
• Male	54%
• Female	46%
Age Group:	
• <= 30	36%
• 31 – 40	36%
• 41 – 50	16%
• > 50	12%
Qualification:	
• <= High School	49%
• Bachelor	45%
• >= Master	6%
Level of Management:	
• Entry	79%
• Middle	15%
• Senior	6%

4.1 Measurement

4.1.1 Job Stress

The scale measures Job Stress consisting of 9 items used (eg "I feel a job is being charged too much"). All items are measured on a five-point likert scale from "Strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

4.1.2 Intention to leave

Intention to leave variable contains 9 items (e.g "I will leave the company whenever I have a chance"). All items are measured on a five-point likert scale from "Strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

4.1.3 Communication

Communication measured by 2 dimensions, leader – member communication and internal communication. The variable contains 12 items (e.g, "My supervisor provides positive and constructive feedback with the objective of improving my performance"). All items are measured on a five-point likert scale from "Strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

4.2 Data analytical technique

To analyze the data, SPSS version 20 is used. Statistical analyzes such as obtaining descriptive statistics, developing correlation matrices, and calculating Cronbach Alpha values from the various steps used in this study have been analyzed using SPSS. The hypothesized model emerging from the literature review is subject to appropriate analysis and tests. Hierarchical Regression analysis is used for this purpose. Model hypotheses are tested and conclusions about appropriate models and receipts are reported.

4.3 Data Analysis

Table 2: Descriptive, correlation between variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Cronbach alpha	N items	Correlations			
					IL	JoS	Comm1	Comm2
IL	3.33	.72	.90	9	-	.47	.04	.01
JoS	3.25	.64	.84	9	.47	-	-.10	-.16
Comm1	3.82	.63	.84	6	.04	-.10	-	.28
Comm2	4.14	.48	.77	6	.01	-.16	.28	-

Notes: *all dimensions significant based on $p < .01$, accept IL-Comm1, & IL-Comm2; IL = Intention to Leave; JoS = Job Stress; Comm1 = Communication (leader-member communication); Comm2 = Communication (internal communication).

Tabel 3: Result of Hierarchical Regression

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,606	,297		5,408	,000
	JoS	,529	,089	,471	5,915	,000
2	(Constant)	,830	,668		1,243	,216
	JoS	,549	,091	,488	6,045	,000
	Comm2	,089	,125	,060	,713	,477
	Comm1	,089	,095	,078	,938	,350
	(Constant)	7,163	2,976		2,407	,018
3	JoS	-1,437	,937	-1,277	-1,534	,128
	Comm2	-1,678	,658	-1,126	-2,549	,012
	Comm1	,400	,454	,349	,882	,380
	Comm1xJoS	-,092	,147	-,385	-,627	,532
	Comm2xJoS	,551	,202	2,240	2,731	,007

a. Dependent Variable: IL

Data are subjected to statistical analysis in order to test the hypothesis above. First, on average, standard deviation (SD), reliability and intercorrelation are calculated. Table 2 shows the mean, SD, and coefficient reliability for all sizes. Since the value for Cronbach Alpha is far above the recommended threshold of 0.60, then the reliability of the measurement is considered valid (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Table 2 shows the correlation bivariate results between latent variables. Indicators have residual standards greater than $|4|$ (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Therefore, all indicators with factor loadings greater than 0.5 and fewer residues of $|2.5|$ considered for further analysis. The results of the analysis for the overall measurement model are shown in table 3. The model is prepared recursively to avoid problems associated with a statistical identification (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). This model shows a perfect fit for the data.

Results And Discussions

Table 3 shows the results of hypothesis testing. In order to test the hypotheses, hierarchical multiple regression analyses should be conducted. Specifically, in a regression equation with Intention to Leave (IL) as the dependent variable, at the first hierarchical step, Job Stress (JoS) as independent variable was entered into the equation; and then at the second step, the two dimensions of Communication, there are Leader-member communication (Comm1), and Internal communication (Comm2) were entered into the equation. Finally, at the third step, all of interaction variables between 2 dimensions of Communication as moderator variables and Job Stress as independent variable were entered into the equation. Result was found out that the first step explained 22% of the variance in employee's intention to leave. Job Stress was found positively and significantly associated with Intention to Leave ($b = .53$, $p < .01$). Hence, the hypothesis H1 is accepted. Furthermore, in step 2, the two dimensions of Communication show an insignificant relationship with Intention to Leave, with each influence as follows: Leader-member communication ($\beta = .09$, $p > .05$), and internal communication ($\beta = .09$, $p > .05$). Hipotesis H2 (a), dan H2 (b) unaccepted.

The total effect of moderation on all communication variable dimensions was only significant in the interaction variables between Job Stress and internal communication. These results confirm the effects of internal communication dimensions moderates the relationship between job stress and intention to leave. The condition indexes, VIF, and tolerance were found to be within acceptable readings, thus ruling out the potential problem of multicollinearity. Therefore, hypotheses H3b are accepted.

Based on the results of the research, job stress proved to significantly influence intention to leave. This confirms pre-existing studies (Abualrub & Al-Zaru, 2008; Jiang et al., 2017; Labrague et al., 2018; Park et al., 2017). This confirms that the company should pay more attention to the stress level of its employees.

Conclusions

This study investigates the correlation between work stressor factors with employee intention to leave the job, and the moderating role played by leader-member communication and internal communication. This provides empirical evidence for this perception, that this study can support their company's internal communication to identify the source of employee turnover. To recognize external competitiveness and survival in the future, organizations must face the challenge of human resources. Undoubtedly, Job Stress is definitely affecting the intention to leave employees. They try to improve the ability of employees to perform tasks and motivate them to perform according to the expected workload. Work stressors play an important role for intention to leave.

This research can be applied empirically for further study in different industries to check whether the framework is applicable to other organizational contexts. But different industries will have different factors, so it is important to find the factors that influence before continuing with this research. Further researchers can even focus on smaller groups such as professional employees, such as support staff only. Lastly, in this study, the role of moderator effects is not underestimated, so future researchers can test the moderator and mediator effects of all the proposed variables.

References

- Abualrub, R. F., & Al-Zaru, I. M. (2008). Job stress, recognition, job performance and intention to stay at work among Jordanian hospital nurses. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 16(3), 227–236. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2834.2007.00810.x>
- Azeez, R. O. (2016). JOB SATISFACTION, TURNOVER INTENTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT. *BVIMSR's Journal of Management Research*, 8(2).
- Basak, E., Ekmekci, E., Bayram, Y., & Bas, Y. (2013). Analysis of Factors That Affect the Intention to Leave of White-collar Employees in Turkey Using Structural Equation Modelling. *Proceedings of the World Congress on Engineering and Computer Science 2013, II*, 23–25. Retrieved from <http://www.doaj.org/doaj?func=fulltext&aId=1970134>
- Calisir, F., Gumussoy, C. A., & Iskin, I. (2011). Factors affecting intention to quit among IT professionals in Turkey. *Personnel Review*, 40(4), 514–533. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483481111133363>
- Cao, L., Hirschi, A., & Deller, J. (2014). Perceived organizational support and intention to stay in host countries among self-initiated expatriates: The role of career satisfaction and networks. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(14), 2013–2032. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.870290>
- Chen, M. F., Lin, C. P., & Lien, G. Y. (2011). Modelling job stress as a mediating role in predicting turnover intention. *Service Industries Journal*, 31(8), 1327–1345. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642060903437543>
- Firth, L., Mellor, D. J., Moore, K. A., & Loquet, C. (2004). How can managers reduce employee intention to quit? *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 19(2), 170–187. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940410526127>
- Han, K., Trinkoff, A. M., & Gurses, A. P. (2015). Work-related factors, job satisfaction and intent to leave the current job among United States nurses. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 24(21–22), 3224–3232. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.12987>
- Hayes, B., Douglas, C., & Bonner, A. (2015). Work environment, job satisfaction, stress and burnout among haemodialysis nurses. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 23(5), 588–598. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.12184>
- Jiang, H., Ma, L., Gao, C., Li, T., Huang, L., & Huang, W. (2017). Satisfaction, burnout and intention to stay of emergency nurses in Shanghai. *Emergency Medicine Journal*, 34(7), 448–453. <https://doi.org/10.1136/emered-2016-205886>

- Labrague, L. J., Gloe, D. S., McEnroe-Petitte, D. M., Tsaras, K., & Colet, P. C. (2018). Factors influencing turnover intention among registered nurses in Samar Philippines. *Applied Nursing Research*, 39(March 2017), 200–206. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2017.11.027>
- Leka, S., Griffiths, A., & Cox, T. (2004). Work Organization & Stress. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, (3), 1–26. <https://doi.org/92415904751729-3499>
- Lu, A. C. C., & Gursoy, D. (2016). Impact of Job Burnout on Satisfaction and Turnover Intention. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 40(2), 210–235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348013495696>
- Noor, S. (2008). Examining the Relationship between Work Life Conflict , Stress And Turnover Intentions among Marketing Executives in Pakistan. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 3(11), 93–102. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v3n11p93>
- Park, J., Yoon, S., Moon, S. S., Lee, K. H., & Park, J. (2017). The Effects of Occupational Stress, Work-Centrality, Self-Efficacy, and Job Satisfaction on Intent to Quit Among Long-Term Care Workers in Korea. *Home Health Care Services Quarterly*, 36(2), 96–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01621424.2017.1333479>
- Ramamurthi, K., Vakilbashi, A., Zaleha, S., Rashid, A., & Mokhber, M. (2016). Impact of Job Stressors Factors on Employees ` Intention to Leave Mediated by Job Engagement and Dispositional Factors, 6(3), 528–531.
- Singh, M., & Raison, G. H. (2015). Effective Organization Communication. *International Journal of Research and Development*, III(Ii), 2279–73. Retrieved from <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2580070%5Cnwww.ijrdonline.com>
- Siti Fatimah, M. (2008). Effects of communication on turnover intention : A case of hotel employees in Malaysia, (Effects of communication on turnover intention: A case of hotel employees in Malaysia), 1–79. Retrieved from <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2193&context=etd>
- Teddlie, C., & Yu, F. (2007). *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2345678906292430>