

Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention among Travel Agency Employees in Selangor

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Abstract: Job satisfaction is among the most difficult issues for many business leaders to address. Researchers have widely discussed this problem, yet statistics still show an alarming increase, and various factors cause it to happen often. This study aims to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention and investigate the moderating effect of employee gender and years of experience on the relationship. The four workplace satisfaction determinants—career advancement, employee empowerment, pay level, and nature of the work—that affect employee turnover intention are covered in this study. This study involved respondents among the travel agencies' employees within the state of Selangor, regardless of their working position. A set of questionnaires was distributed to 130 employees from 26 travel agency companies that participated in the study. The results show employee empowerment has a significant negative relationship with turnover intention. It has been also found that the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention is significantly moderated by gender and years of experience. This study recommends that further research should use a larger sample size and qualitative methods to gain comprehensive knowledge regarding the phenomenon.

Keywords: *Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intention, Travel Agency, Employees, Selangor*

1. Introduction and Background

Malaysia has a stable labor market with an increase in employment from 15.3 million to 15.6 million in quarter one of 2018, with the service sector recording the largest employment at 62.2 percent (DOSM, 2019a). Job vacancy increments in the market are also reported as highly competitive, with Malaysia expected to have 40,4513 job vacancies by the end of 2022 (DOSM, 2019a). The government's strategic location, competitive environment, and stable business policies have attracted foreign investors to Malaysia, making the job market attractive for employees however, maintaining current good employees is extremely challenging. Many organizations face challenges in retaining employees and addressing turnover intention in today's globalized economy. Human resources play a crucial role in retaining experienced and skilled employees, but training new employees is time-consuming and challenging. In Malaysia, the average number of people changing jobs is 15 months and 73% of employees leave their existing company after switching roles (Page, 2015). To maintain a low turnover rate, organizations need to maintain a balance between inflowing talent and outflowing the best employees as many research shows that high turnover rates can negatively impact productivity and organizational profits. Malaysia has a sizable labor force, with the manufacturing and services industries employing the most people, according to the National Employment Returns report, which is produced yearly by the Institute of Labour Market Information and Analysis (ILMIA). In Malaysia, this industry has an average turnover rate of 20%, with lower-skill groups contributing to greater rates.

One of the reasons for job turnover is primarily caused by a lack of career progression, with 52 percent of employees stating that career advancement is the main reason to leave the company. Another push factor is seeking fresh challenges and salary increments, with 35 percent of employees seeking salary increases (Page, 2015). The Malaysia Employee Intentions Report (2015) found that 54 percent of respondents would be open to new jobs due to future career advancement and progression, while 49 percent would be motivated by salary increments. In many businesses, high turnover rates have long been a problem and a financial burden. Much research has been done on the reasons behind employee turnover, but the majority of them have focused on

the hotel sector, with very few also looking at travel agents (Phang, 2014). In addition to this increase in turnover, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS, 2020) reports that the tourist and hospitality sector experiences between 70 and 80 percent of annual turnover.

Hossain (2020) reported that those who work in the service industry, think that the workplace can occasionally be extremely hard and competitive. Consequently, it often leads to employee turnover, which is a serious issue for any company within the industry. According to Dwesini (2019), a significant staff turnover will have both positive and negative effects on the company where it has a detrimental effect on employees which may cause sales and profitability to decline. Thus, within the tourism sector, it is critical to understand both the possibility of resignation and job happiness in a study by Willie (2021), it has been demonstrated that greater job happiness is linked to improved employee productivity, which in turn results in better experience quality and more robust customer and organizational engagement.

In a prior study, Lei, Basit and Hassan (2018) investigated how job satisfaction can result in employees faithfully serving in an organization by reducing the turnover rate of intention among them. The study was conducted among 139 respondents out of a total population of 191 people in a travel agency in Malaysia. Prior studies (Nointin, 2018) have shown that among workers in travel companies in Sabah, Malaysia, job satisfaction positively affects the propensity to leave. It also recommends that the study population be expanded to include Malaysian travel agencies in future studies. Therefore, exploring and understanding job satisfaction is imperative for organizations to prevent losses and unnecessary cost increases as the biggest valuable asset in an organization is its experienced employees. Replacing them with experienced employees can be costly and negatively impact morale and business opportunities thus it is essential for organizations to thoroughly explore and understand job satisfaction to prevent losses and unnecessary costs.

There is also a need for employers to address the gender gap between male and female employees in terms of job satisfaction. According to a 2017 Jobstreet.com happiness poll of workers in the service sector, gender influences job satisfaction, with certain work conditions favoring male employees more than female employees. Furthermore, male and female employees have notable salary disparities, with male employees making more money than female employees (Ho, 2018). The labor force in Malaysia is divided into 15.77 million (48.4%) males and 15.25 million (46.8%) employed persons (DOSM, 2019c). The gap between males and females is statistically high, with males in the labor force and employed persons showing statistically higher numbers. The government has been working to attract more females to the labor force, but organizations must understand and justify their job satisfaction. One major issue is wage level and career enhancement. Female employees receive a mean of RM 890 monthly, while male employees receive RM 1,914 monthly (DOSM, 2019a). This gap is about 46 percent, with males receiving extra salaries even in the same sector and position. Some argue that males are more educated than females but this is not accurate (Abou-Shouk, 2021). Understanding the dynamic of job satisfaction and turnover intention impacted by gender is important. Despite the increasing number of female employees holding higher positions, male employees still dominate in certain areas. Organizations should focus on pressuring female employees to take higher positions to improve their wages and reduce turnover intention.

2. Literature Review

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a crucial aspect of organizational well-being, as satisfied workers perform better and contribute to higher performance levels. Research has been conducted to identify factors that contribute to employee satisfaction, such as individual attitudes toward work, motivation, and organizational policies. Herzberg's two-factor theory suggests that certain job motivation elements, such as recognition, achievement, work nature, advancement, growth, and responsibility, contribute to job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1959). However, other factors, such as company policy, working conditions, relationships with peers and subordinates, supervisors, salary and benefits, and job security, can also contribute to job dissatisfaction which is known as the hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1959). A study by Ghazi, Shahzada and Khan (2013) found that academic staff were satisfied with both hygiene and motivation factors, while the motivation of university teachers depended more on hygiene factors being fulfilled. Herzberg's theory suggests to preserve excellent

instruction and successful student outcomes, employers should concentrate on elements that affect job satisfaction.

Nature of Work

When the work is intriguing, the person could be thrilled and driven by the nature of the work. Maintaining enthusiasm for job content that does not pique an employee's attention is extremely difficult. Chin (2018) separated the measurement of intrinsic and extrinsic work satisfaction into two sections. The nature of work and opportunities for career advancement are measured by intrinsic job satisfaction, whereas salary and supervision are measured by extrinsic job satisfaction. The nature of the work indicates a positive relationship with the employee, however, the association between job satisfaction and supervision in Malaysia's manufacturing industries yields a negative relationship.

Another study by Ibrahim, et al. (2014) comparing the United States and Singaporean samples demonstrates significant differences statistically in t-tests measuring the nature of work. On the other hand, no statistical difference is shown to occur among Singaporean and Malaysia sample depending on observed running condition satisfaction. A study conducted in 2015 by Raziq and Maulabakhsh in Quetta, Pakistan, on employee job satisfaction found a favorable correlation between workplace culture and employee job happiness. This implies that to increase employee satisfaction, firms would need to quickly grasp the importance of a positive work environment.

Pay Level

Employee pay or wages are classified as compensation for their job (Spector, 1997). In a study by Richardson, Mikkelsen and Burkes (1997) there is a difference between men and women in terms of promotion and pay in doing the job. According to Clark (1997), this analysis reveals that women's employment is weaker than men's by certain statistical criteria, but women record higher rates of work satisfaction than men do. A study by Guha and Chakrabarti (2014) considered pay level as a pull factor and the result shows higher pay becomes a significant reason for IT workers to enter a new organization. Furthermore, a study by Ibrahim et al. (2014) revealed pay subscales were statistically important among workers in the United States and Singapore.

Employee Empowerment

According to Rana and Singh's (2016) study, work satisfaction scores and employee empowerment have a significant and favorable relationship. The study found that workplace ownership offers workers the power to execute the strategy and the manager's goal. A key strategy for managing the business to counter external stressors has been leveraging employee satisfaction and their support for the workplace. Employee empowerment is specifically described as giving employees decision-making authority while ensuring the highest level of customer satisfaction. Kim and Fernandez (2016) examined a quantitative model of the relationship between workplace satisfaction and the attrition plan of federal bureaucrats in the United States. The premise that employee empowerment favorably and considerably improves job satisfaction, which in turn has a considerable and negative impact on turnover, is strongly supported by the empirical investigation's findings.

Career Enhancement

Wexler (2001) defines advancement in career and employee growth as a promotion. A research of 26,359 managers in a financial services business found that promoted managers are less inclined to resign than non-promoted managers, and promoted women are less willing to withdraw than promoted men. A study has been done by Zhang (2016) to study the influence of job satisfaction and turnover intention among industrial workers. The findings revealed that a lack of professional progress in career enhancement and development is the most important factor contributing to employee turnover. This suggests that a corporation that provides a decent career path system for its employees while also offering promotions can retain good personnel.

Years of Experience

Terms of service or working experience are frequently taken into consideration when evaluating an individual's level of job satisfaction and risk of attrition. The number of particular studies on the impact of years of work experience on turnover and job satisfaction is still very small at this time. Sukriket (2014), however, discovered that the number of years of service in the current organization had a substantial impact on turnover

expectation, even if around half of the respondents envisaged leaving the firm within three years. The younger respondents, who had worked for the organization for one to two years, had the greatest intention of leaving their current position. Meanwhile, Zhang (2016) investigated the factors that influence employee turnover, focusing mostly on personal factors such as gender, age, years of employment, education, and experience. He found that younger workers with higher levels of education and inexperience seem to be less loyal to the company and to be more dissatisfied with their jobs overall.

Gender

One trait that has drawn a lot of attention is gender, particularly in the context of understanding work satisfaction and turnover. The theory of social roles contends that males and females tend to act differently in intent to exhibit turnover (Eagly, 2012). According to Lambert, et al. (2001), it has been demonstrated that men are less satisfied with their jobs than women. Men continued in their careers since they were frequently portrayed as the main breadwinners. Although the impact of gender on work satisfaction is also assessed, the literature has produced contradictory results. According to studies, women were more likely than their male coworkers to quit their occupations, supporting this argument. The study by Abubakar and Maitama (2015) is suggested to replicate and broaden the findings of earlier research by examining the moderating effect of gender on the connection between work satisfaction and employee turnover intention.

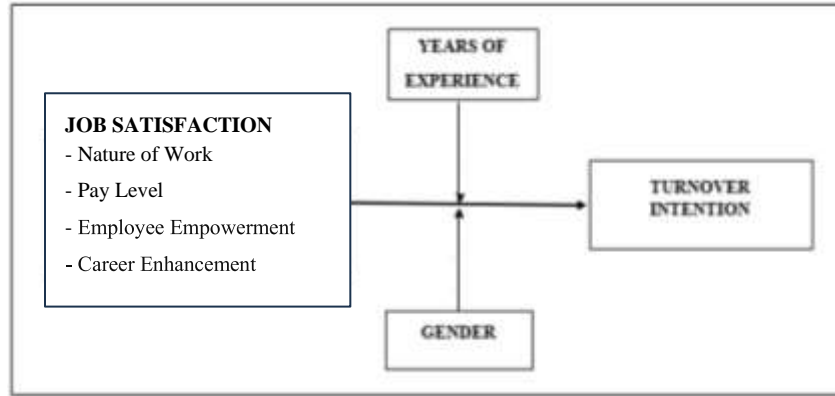
Turnover Intention

The percentage or quantity of workers who leave an organization and are replaced by new hires is referred to as employee turnover. These days, a lot of businesses are conscious of and concerned about the staff turnover rate. Turnover intention has been the subject of in-depth study by numerous academics, and it continues to be a productive area of research in the field of organizational psychology (Abubakar & Maitama Kura, 2015; Guha & Chakrabarti, 2014). A study by Tnay et al., (2013) aimed at ensuring that workers are kept within an organization, concentrated on a variety of variables that may affect employee engagement behavior, including work satisfaction (pay satisfaction, supervisory support, and organizational dedication. The finding revealed pay satisfaction is correlated with the intention of the turnover of employees. This is similar to another research by Phang, Kucukusta and Chan (2014) who studied Hong Kong travel agencies workers' turnover intention. Five factors are found to be substantially correlated with turnover intention that are, total work satisfaction, career jumping, employment stability, educational chances, and promotional incentives.

Research Objectives and Hypothesis

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention among employees in the travel agencies within the Selangor area. The objectives of the study are (1) to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover intention, (2) to investigate the moderating effect of employee gender on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, (3) to investigate the moderating impact of the employee years of experience towards the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Figure 1. shows the research framework in which job satisfaction is measured through four variables (nature of work, pay level, career enhancement, and employee empowerment) on turnover intention. The moderating factors are gender and years of experience. The study's hypotheses attempted to find whether; the nature of work negatively affects turnover intention (H1a), the pay level negatively affects turnover intention (H1b), the employee empowerment negatively affects turnover intention (H1c) and career enhancement affects turnover intention (H1d). The study also hypothesized; that year of experience moderates the turnover intention (H2) and, that gender moderates the turnover intention (H3).

Figure 1: Research Framework on the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention: Gender and Years of Experience as Moderator



3. Research Methodology

This cross-sectional quantitative study includes the employees working in travel agencies in Selangor with a total population of 13,252 people. The unit of analysis is trainee, non-executive, junior executive, and senior executive. The sampling frame is retrieved from the MOTAC data system, with respondents from 110 travel agencies in Selangor. The study consists of 130 respondents from 26 travel agencies. The sample size is calculated using G Power analysis, with an effect size of 0.15 and several predictors according to the variable. The sample size indicated for this study is 129. A convenience sampling technique is used to collect data from 130 employees working in a tourism agency in Selangor. The questionnaire was distributed via email to the administrative officer, who circulated it among the staff. The items for nature of work, pay level, employee empowerment, and career enhancement were adopted from Chin (2018), Chan (2019), Rana (2016), and Ibrahim (2018). All the items used 5 Likert scales ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest scale in each section. The reliability of indicators is shown in Table 1.

A preliminary test for testing the normality of the data was conducted and data were analyzed using SPSS 25.0 using multiple regression to assess the correlation of the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention and the moderating effect of years of experience and gender.

Table 1: Reliability Value

Previous Study	Job Satisfaction	Cronbach Alpha
Factor A- Nature of Work (Chin, 2018)		0.714
Factor B- Pay Level (Chan, 2019)		0.850
Factor C- Employee Empowerment (Rana, 2016)		0.584
Factor D- Career Enhancement (Ibrahim, 2018)		0.840

4. Results

Statistical evaluation of the data was performed in IBM SPSS Statistics version 25.0 using descriptive statistics and regression analysis to assess the predictive value of independent variables. The values of Skewness and Kurtosis for all variables are within the range of ± 3 . The subsequent analysis proceeded as the first assumption of multivariate analysis was met. Table 2. highlights the demographic details of the respondents who participated in the study.

Table 2: Demographic Details of Respondents (n=130)

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage %
Age	18-30	51	44.6
	21-40	58	39.2
	41-50	21	16.2
Gender	Male	57	43.8
	Female	73	56.2
Education Level	SPM	7	5.4
	STPM	9	6.9
	Diploma	48	36.9
	Bachelor Degree	58	44.6
	Master	8	6.2
Total years of working experience	0-2 years	11	8.5
	3-5 years	33	25.4
	6-8 years	39	30.0
	>9 years	47	36.2
Current Position	Trainee	4	3.1
	Non-Executive	26	20.0
	Junior Executive	47	36.2
	Senior Executive	53	40.8
Total		130	100

The majority of respondents were in the age group of 21 to 40, contributing the most significant percentage, and females formed slightly more than half of the total respondents. An enormous number of participants have a bachelor's degree qualification (44.6%), and most had a cumulative number of working experiences of more than nine years (36.2%). Senior executives and junior executives' positions contribute the most profile of respondents in the organizations (77%).

Table 3: Coefficients of Multiple Regression Analysis

	Beta	Partial Correlation	t-value	sig
Constant	34.809	2.135	16.307	<0.000
Employee Empowerment	-.272	-.215	-2.493	<0.014
The excluded Variable Nature of Work	-.020	-.017	-.189	.850
Pay Level	-.148	-.111	-1.254	.212
Career Enhancement	-.074	-.054	-.613	.541

R = 0.215, R² = 0.046, F = 6.213, P < 0.05

In the multiple regression analysis of independent variables thought to affect turnover intention (nature of work, pay level, career enhancement, employee empowerment), the resulting model was significant ($R = 0.215$, $R^2 = 0.046$, $F = 6.213$, $P < 0.05$). When the predictive value of job satisfaction was examined, a significant relationship was detected between employee empowerment and turnover intention ($\beta = -0.272$, $p < 0.05$). Nature of work, pay level, and career enhancement were not associated with turnover intention ($p > 0.05$). The coefficient value shows that the intention to leave the company decreases by 0.272 for every unit increase in employee empowerment. The finding further confirmed that hypothesis 1c is accepted while hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1d are rejected.

Table 4: Model Summary (Gender and years of working experience as moderators)

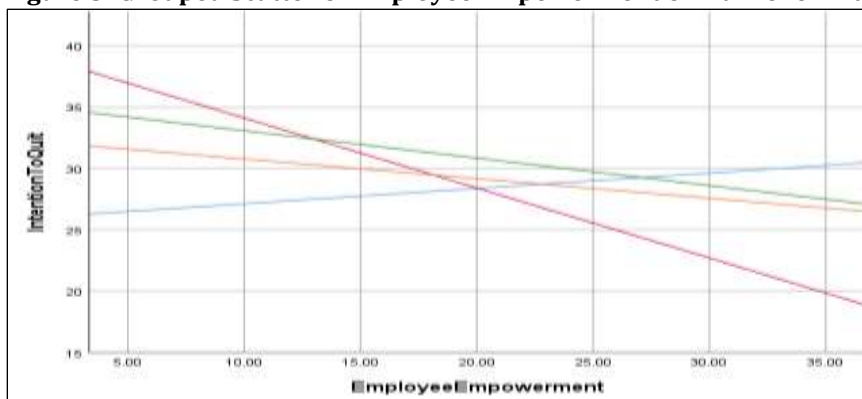
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
EE	.226 ^a	.051	.036	.58805
EE x Gender	.247 ^b	.061	.039	.58731
EE	.350 ^a	.123	.101	5.121
EE x YOY	.369 ^b	.136	.103	5.114

F = 2.725, Sig.=0.047, P < 0.05 (Gender moderator); F = 4.143, Sig. =0.09, P < 0.05 (Years of working experience moderator)

Figure 2: Grouped Scatter of Employee Empowerment on Turnover Intention by Gender



Figure 3: Grouped Scatter of Employee Empowerment on Turnover Intention by Years of Experience



The hierarchical regression analysis on moderators towards employee empowerment and turnover intention has yielded significant results for gender ($F = 2.725, p = 0.047$) and years of working experience ($F = 4.143, p = 0.009$). The model summary result in Table 4. shows the variance of the dependent variable turnover intention for both moderator gender and years of experience are 3.9% and 10.3% respectively ($R = 0.247, R^2 = 0.039$) and years of working experience ($R = 0.369, R^2 = 0.103$). The results are significant at $p < 0.05$. Gender and years of working experience are found to have moderating effects on turnover intention through employee empowerment. Males have the highest job satisfaction through employee empowerment as compared to females. People with 3 to 5 years of working experience have the highest turnover intention as compared to those who have 9 years of working experience who have the lowest turnover intention. The findings further

prove that hypotheses 3 and 4 are confirmed and accepted. Hence, all hypotheses within this study are supported except for H1a (nature of work, H1b (pay level), and H1d (career enhancement). The study confirms that employee empowerment is the key factor that leads to turnover intention among employees while gender and years of working experience moderate the relationship.

Discussion

Four factors of job satisfaction were measured within this study that are pay level, nature of work, career enhancement, and employee empowerment. The result from the study indicates job satisfaction through employee empowerment affects turnover intention where employees who experience job empowerment will decrease the intention to leave the company. This study shows employee empowerment has the greatest impact on turnover intention and this further indicates that higher degrees of independence and non-routine job duties are linked to a reduced likelihood of turnover. The finding is supported by a previous study (Kim & Fernandez, 2016) where the outcome shows staff empowerment has a positive and materially meaningful impact on job satisfaction, which in turn has a negative and substantive impact on the purpose of turnover. Additionally, it is also supported by Sergio and Rylova (2018) who highlighted to ensure that individuals are engaged and satisfied with their jobs, employee empowerment may prove to be the most effective strategy, and being employee-empowered is primarily focused on granting them the authority to make decisions independently. Besides that, the factor of pay level in job satisfaction shows there is no relationship with turnover intention and this finding correlates with previous studies that indicate a non-relationship between pay level and turnover intention (Romeo, Yepes-Baldo, & Lins, 2020). Concurrently, the nature of the work exhibits negligible value in the multiple regression analysis, indicating the absence of a relationship between turnover intention and turnover, a finding corroborated by earlier research (Al Sabei, et al., 2020). Finally, there is a negligible correlation between job satisfaction and turnover intention when it comes to the career enhancement components as discovered in this study.

Employee empowerment and turnover intention also revealed a substantial association between job satisfaction and the moderating impacts of an employee's gender. There exists a robust association between the components of employee empowerment and the degree to which gender influences the intention to leave. This outcome aligns with the research findings by Righther (2017) who also found gender strongly moderates the association between job satisfaction and intention to resign, according to a sample of employees from various organizations operating abroad. It is also evident from the results that men are more satisfied with their jobs' empowerment than women are. Research by Crookston et al. (2021) supports this, demonstrating how men differ noticeably from women in that they feel more in control.

Men who feel powerful at work and who are also highly satisfied with their jobs are less likely to want to change jobs. Previous research (Obi, 2021) that looked at the degree of empowerment of non-managerial bank employees in both Nigeria and the U.S. supports the findings of this study by showing that male respondents in both nations exhibit higher levels of empowerment than female respondents. The study also demonstrates a substantial association between job satisfaction and turnover intention, with years of experience having a moderating influence. Notably, the group with the highest turnover intention is one with three to five years of experience. Sukriket (2014) supports this conclusion with research on employees that reveals most respondents intend to quit the company, with younger respondents having worked there for two to three years making up the majority of respondents. Additionally, this study demonstrates that the group with the lowest intention of turnover has more than nine years of experience. Previous studies have also indicated that employees with more experience with the current organization are likely to have fewer plans to depart (Gupta & Shaheen, 2017; Zhang, 2016).

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The study's main objective is to assist the Selangor tourist organization in comprehending the relationship between job happiness and intention to leave, taking into account the moderating effects of gender and years of experience. This study has already looked at several factors that influence turnover intentions, and it turns out that gender and years of experience supported the noteworthy value association between employee empowerment and turnover intention. For future studies, it is crucial to consider other variables that may impact the intention of staff turnover. Furthermore, certain of the correlations discovered were not in the path

expected by the hypotheses thus extended studies are required to disentangle these interactions and offer more insight into the link between job satisfaction and intention to leave in travel agency companies in a larger geographical context that is the whole state of Selangor. Furthermore, it would be interesting to use the qualitative research method to examine the participants' observations, along with the focused group which can help to develop a more comprehensive knowledge of turnover intention behaviors.

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