

Do Job Attitudes Mediate the Relationship between Perceived Work Environment Characteristics and Turnover?

Uzma Javed, Keith Whitfield, and Shumaila Yousafzai
CIIT Islamabad; Cardiff University; Cardiff University

ABSTRACT

Meta-analytic techniques are used to examine the relationship between perceived work environment characteristics, job attitudes, and turnover. In addition, structural equation modelling is used to test a model describing the direct and indirect relationships between work environment characteristics, job attitudes and turnover.

Consistent with earlier findings, job attitudes (job satisfaction and organization commitment) are shown to be immediate predictors of turnover. Of the eight work environment characteristics considered, psychological work demands, autonomy, participation, communication and supervisor support were included in earlier meta-analyses of the job satisfaction and organization commitment literature. The present meta-analysis also found that trust, flexibility and family care benefits are consistent antecedents of work outcomes.

Perceived work environment characteristics related to managerial supportiveness such as trust, participation, communication and supervisor support are shown to have the strongest relationships with job attitudes. Trust was found to have the strongest inter-relationships with 'employee participation', 'supervisor support' and 'communication'. This finding suggests that these four aspects can be used to measure managerial supportiveness. Thus a work environment characterized by mutual trust between employees and their superiors, employee participation in decision making, the communication of company related information to employees, and support by superiors will foster positive attitudes among employees. Perceived work environment characteristics related to the job, such as autonomy and perceived work overload, have a moderate relationship with job attitudes, suggesting that a work environment that places fewer work demands on employees and gives them more control over their work will foster positive attitudes among employees.

This meta-analysis is the first attempt of its type to include the family-friendly characteristics of work environment as an antecedent of job attitudes and turnover. Variables relating to the family-friendliness of the work environment (flexibility and family care

benefits) have demonstrated moderate positive relationships with both job satisfaction and organization commitment.

Also, the results of the meta-analysis indicate that the characteristics of a supportive work environment have stronger and more reliable relationships with employee job attitudes (job satisfaction and organization commitment) than turnover. All the work environment variables are positively related with job attitudes and, on the other hand, job attitudes have a negative relationship with turnover. This pattern of correlations suggests that the effect of work environment perceptions on turnover may be mediated by job attitudes.

The results of SEM analysis supported the hypothesis that the effect of perceived work environment characteristics on turnover is mediated by employees' effective job attitudes. A single latent variable 'work environment characteristics' (WEC) accounted for the effects of work environment characteristics on both attitudinal and behavioural outcomes, whereas the latent variable on job attitudes accounted for the effects of attitudinal variables on behavioural variables. In this study, the latent variable WEC has a strong positive association with job attitudes and job attitudes and, in turn, a moderate negative association with turnover.